



Christ Over All
Part 6 – A New Way of Loving
Shay Robbins and Scott McElvain

Scott McElvain: Well, I have to tell you we have a new tradition in the McElvain house. I also have to be upfront with you, I'm not a shopper. I don't like shopping. I don't feel the need to buy some new clothes. I go shopping when my clothes are torn or ripped or there are buttons missing and my wife says, "You're about three weeks past getting a new shirt, so go get you one." I have to be honest that in that, we've started this new tradition in which every time I come up here to preach, we go get a new shirt and so, I want you to know...

Shay Robbins: Does this guy look good or what? What a good-looking guy.

Scott McElvain: This is my new shirt. Thank you, thank you. My wife approved it, so I got the thumbs up on that. I also have to admit, and I think you feel this too. When we purchase some new clothes or they're fitting right, we feel a certain way. There's a certain confidence that comes along when we put some clothes on that fit right or we look good in. I feel that right now. I'm feeling good. So, thank you, my wife, for giving me a thumbs up and the confidence I need up here.

I recently heard a story from a pastor in which he describes a childhood story that happened to him when he was young or happened in his community. There was a country club with a large golf course on it, a really nice country club. The security officer who was patrolling the country club and the course that day happened to see somebody dressed in some clothing that was not to the standards of the country club. He had holes in his jeans, ripped shirt, just ratty shoes on.

The security officer goes over there and says, "Sir, I'm going to need to ask you to leave. Your attire is not to the standard of the country club."

The gentleman replied, "Security officer, I'm the owner of this country club."

"I'm sure you are, sir."

Well, it continued to the point that the security officer put him in the back of his car and took him down to the police station. At the police station, it was confirmed to the security officer that he was the owner of the country club. You see, he dressed like he owned the place because he did own the place.

The security officer fell into what I think is my next point. **Our clothes help reflect or recognize positions.** I work at a private Christian school and in that, our students wear polos and I wear a tie.

When you walk into the room, it's very easily noticed who is the student and who is the teacher. When I go to a basketball game, it's very easily understood who the referee is and who the players are. When I'm going on date night and I go to put on my best clothes, picking out my new shirts, my best clothes, and I come out... I'm about at a 50% rate right now. It was 75%, but I'm at 50% because we're going on eight years of marriage this Tuesday. I get one of these. There are no words any more, it's just a hand gesture telling me to turn around and try again. What my wife is saying is, "What you're clothed in does not match the position of being my husband. This is not working. You've got to try that again."

I talk about clothes and introduce this way because here in Colossians 3... If you've been with us, you know we've been going, verse by verse, through Colossians 3. Today, Shay and I have Colossians 3: 9-17. So, if you have your Bibles, crack those open. I want to point one thing out as we begin. Paul begins using language of this "put on" and "put off" of clothing. The actual Greek translation to that word and imagery that he uses is *enduo*, which translates back into English as "the putting on and off of a garment or a piece of clothing." Paul uses this to tell Christians how we might love one another, be in community with one another, and how we should be treating one another. What should we be putting on and what should we be putting off?

Whenever I think about my position in Christ, I always go to the passage Galatians 2: 20. As we read that this morning, ***20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*** You see, my position is a son of God and I've accepted Christ. The old is gone, the new, I've crucified with Christ.

So today, as we jump into Colossians 3, we get to see the ways in which Paul is telling us believers how we should love one another, what we should adorn ourselves in and the garments we should place off. So, Shay, start us off in Verse 9.

Shay Robbins: Well, before I do, I would like to point out that I too am wearing a new shirt, completely by chance. We've been married a little bit longer and I've worn down my wife. She's become very patient. So, this week I walked in and this shirt was lying on the bed, which signifies to me that I've looked like a schlub for two years now. But that's beside the point. Let's get into the text.

9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

So, as believers, those of us who have placed our faith in Jesus have put off the old self and we have put on the new self. In understanding that, right off that bat, Paul is elevating truth for us to understand that as believers, we have to seek out and then live by truth. I also think it's important, as believers, to have a critical mindset to look at the context that we're living in because, oh by the way, this is not our home. We live in a broken world that is full of lies. And it's important to understand what we're up against, which brings me to the first point of this text.

The old self is guided by a false narrative and practices evil. Jesus clearly explained. He said it's out of the heart that a man speaks. So, we know our words and our actions come from the state of our heart. For those of us who are living in the old self, it is guided by a narrative that is false, and as a result, we practice evil.

The author of this false narrative is the Devil. Very clearly, Jesus describes the character of Satan in John 8. He explains that Satan is the father of lies, that he was liar from the very beginning, and he is the author of lies. So, we live in a context where there are lies that have been very strategically and very sinisterly laid out that we live in, and we have to be discerning as believers.

Just as an example, I watched a documentary on Netflix called *The Social Dilemma*. It was released about a year ago and it really is an intriguing look into the world of these big technology companies. They've taken a bunch of former executives and developers from Facebook and Google and Twitter and Instagram and others, and they've given them a behind the scenes look at their original intent. The original intent for social media in general was to be a blessing, to connect people. But their social media engines were driven by the almighty dollar. Jesus explained that the love of money is the root of all evil.

So, the ultimate goal in your interactions on social media and different search engines is to make money. It is the ultimate deciding factor in how they are run. These developers and these executives on *The Social Dilemma* explain that in Facebook for example, they are gathering all of your data, every bit of information, every time you click something, every time you give something a thumbs up, every time you make a comment, every time you read an article, that information is gathered and it is fed into an ever evolving algorithm that is designed to keep you scrolling and to keep you clicking. With every click, it's money in the pocket of Facebook.

They then talk about what it is that causes people to click. What they explain is that people will naturally continue to be engaged when they are affirmed in their own opinions, when they become upset, anxious, angry, or fearful. Did y'all hear that? So, your Facebook feed is specifically driven by an algorithm, with 60,000 brilliant software developers behind it, that is going to feed you what you want to hear and what is going to cause you to get worked up. What happens is... They explain that social media is causing us to become more divided in our country and in the world. I believe that the D in Devil stands for divisive; he wants to drive us apart.

We also need to understand that we all don't have 100% clarity on what truth is. You and I can both be lied to. So, we need to be very wary about what we're consuming. What happens... and this is really interesting. We end up like this guy over here (picture of an ostrich with his head buried in the sand) with your head buried in the sand with all your confirmation bias built up, and you think that you've got the inside scoop on truth. Not only do you, but so does everybody else in the world. That's a scary thing.

In fact, just as an example, NBA basketball player, Kyrie Irving, is a guy who has the finances and access to any information and truth that he wants, in theory. He came out within in the last year convinced that the earth was flat. I'm sure after millions of comments chiding him and his teammates in the locker room just riding him to know end, he finally realized that he was wrong, that the earth is, in fact, a

sphere, and he admitted that it was from him going down a YouTube rabbit hole where he got the point where he was completely convinced that the earth was flat. That's kind of a scary thing.

On other end of the spectrum, **the new self is being renewed to a knowledge after the image of its creator**. Romans 12: 2 says the way we are transformed is through the renewing of our mind.

Years ago, Joe White challenged me to memorize Psalm 91 with a bunch of young men that I was working with. It was eleven years ago. Ever since then, I've used that scripture to combat temptation. So, constantly, every single day, "He who dwells in the shelter of the most high will abide by the shadow of the mighty. I will say to the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust'" is ripping through my brain. I did a little bit of math. I would say on the very conservative end, that scripture runs through my head a half dozen times a day. That times 365 days a year, times the last 11 years, is over 24,000 times I've quoted part or all of Psalm 91.

And before that gives me any shine, I want to make it clear that the reason that's banding around in my head is because 24,000 times I've been standing on the edge of sin, contemplating giving into my own fleshly desires. But in my brokenness and in the beauty of God's truth, is that truth cycles its way through my mind. According to our good friend, the late, great Gary Smalley, that truth falls down and becomes seeded in my belief system and my heart, of which I act out of and speak out of. It is a transformation process that's happening in my life. And something really special happens when truth becomes a part of who we are.

When we put off the old self and we put on the new self, we see people as God sees them...valuable... every nation, tribe, and tongue were unified by the truth. More than ever, Christians need to have a heart for other people. And let me put out a warning. When you find yourself on social media and you find yourself getting angry, critical, looking down on people who look differently than you and think differently than you, it's time to put off the old self and put on the new self, and probably turn your phone off.

Scott McElvain: Yeah, that's so good, Shay. I think that's a great transition for us because here in Verse 12 we get that mental imagery of what we are to put on.

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience... I think whenever I experience a list like this in scripture, the first question I always ask myself is where did we get these character qualities? What is unique about this list? Ultimately, I think the answer is we see that **these are the garments of Christ**. This is what He is clothed in. As I take a second in reflection about those character qualities, I see that the Lord is perfect in those. He is the model of those garments. As we look to him, he is perfection in those.

I don't know about you, but then I also move into **why is it then that I struggle so much with these?** The old is gone and the new is here, but I still find myself struggling in these things. Sometimes illustrations are studied and found, sometimes they just come to you.

I'm taking a lunch break, going to McDonald's to get my McChicken, large fries, large Dr. Pepper. I decide to put on a sermon entitled, *The Virtues of Christ*, by my favorite Scottish pastor. Notepad in hand, I'm coming up to the McDonald's drive thru. Travis Brawner has talked about this where it becomes a game. Am I going to win, can I beat the car in front of me if he takes the other lane? It's a game. I mean sometimes I go up to pay and I'm just downtrodden because I lost. Three cars went ahead of me; boy did I pick the wrong lane.

Big truck going with me in front of me. He takes the outside, I take the inside. The car in front of me had a quick order, I make a quick order because I want to win. I beat him. I'm going to be ahead of him, right? The etiquette is the car goes and then I go, and then big truck should be following me. That's not what happened. I remind you *The Virtues of Christ* sermon on in the back. The truck follows the bumper of the car, not letting me in. My reaction was to lower my head move it forward that I might stare him down. The Virtues of Christ in the back, taking notes.

I kid you not. And that's a funny example to highlight the point that we still struggle with these things. How are we to put on these new things? I heard it once said that we are like a newborn baby in our salvation, fully complete, but just like a baby, there is much room for growth. We may be immature in some of those things. Patience is in the McElvain house right now and it is being tested. I recognize my need to grow in those things, to clothe myself in those things.

So, how do we go about doing that? My first thing is that we must make **a daily choice to clothe oneself in these garments of Christ**. Much like when I get ready for my day at work, as I wear a tie, I do not blindly walk into my closet and just go, "What are we going to wear today." No, I am intentionally making a choice to go to the armoire that has all my business clothes in it. That's an intentional choice that must be made daily by us, to clothe ourselves in the garments of Christ.

How do we continue to do that? My first thing would be to say that **we imitate Christ**. If he is the model of perfection, we must imitate. And for us to imitate, we must be close. For me to imitate, I must be in relationship, I must hear his voice, I must see how he loves and how he treats me and how he has treated others. I must imitate. Paul says, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." We must imitate.

The second thing is **we must practice**. We are learning to read in the McElvain house. Kindergarten student. We have gone over it, is, and a about a thousand times. My hope, as we practice, is that those things become part of our nature. As we make the choice to imitate and to practice, they become more of our nature as God is working on our hearts.

My last thing would be to say **we give grace along the way**. When I read that list of the things I should be clothing myself in, just in my McDonald's story alone, I recognize my need for continual grace. Father, I need your grace. And my hope and my prayer in that, as I ask for grace, is that I extend grace. Paul knew what he was writing because the next verse, Verse 13, after the garments of Christ, he says this. ***13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*** He knew that there will be sin, there will be conflict, and we clothe ourselves in the garments of Christ, giving grace, for we have received grace.

14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. I get the mental imagery of a belt that takes all of these things and makes them work. That love is what puts it altogether in harmony and unity that moves us to imitating Christ to others.

I love how one commentary put it. "Love is the beauty of the believer, dispelling the ugly sins of the flesh that destroy unity." John 13: 35, Jesus says, "They will know you are my disciples by the way you love one another." May we be people that in light of our position, we clothe ourselves daily in Christ. That we would love, and we would be known as God's children.

Shay Robbins: 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. How many of us need the peace of Christ in our lives today? We are in the midst of an election cycle, so we'll have three grueling weeks and then who knows how long after that as they clean up the mess. But those who have placed their faith in Jesus, according to this passage, we can have the peace of Christ to rule our hearts regardless of the circumstances.

In fact, Paul wrote the Philippians while he was sitting in prison and he writes to that church in Chapter 4 and says this. "I've learned to be content in all circumstances." Now, I realize that's the apostle, but he's channeling the same power and the same Christ that you and I channel here today. And we can have peace regardless of what happens in November.

So, this begs the question: How can we let this peace of Christ rule in our hearts? What does that look like practically? We're actually going to do some review from last spring when we talked about overcoming anxiety. There's just kind of practical progression that scripture lays out for us that I want to walk through with you today. To put it plainly, the pathway to shedding the old self and putting on the peace of Christ on a daily basis is through an intimate relationship with God.

Here's kind of the pathway we take. It starts in Psalm 139. David goes to God and he very humbly says... **23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!** So, you ask God, "**What is it that's robbing me of peace today?**" God is good to reveal those things. In fact, this morning, in preparation for this, I got up, asked the same question of the Lord and I was convicted of a sin I committed against my wife last night.

So, I move onto the next thing. **Confess your sin to God and others in order to live with a clear conscience.** Fortunately, 1 John 1:9 gives a great promise. It says that if we bring our sins and we confess them to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. So, I went to Ashly at 6:45 this morning, took ownership of my sin, she was gracious with me, I went to the Lord and asked his forgiveness, and I walk in here with a clean conscience even though I'm a broken man.

The next thing we do is many times the lack of peace that we have, whether through anxiety or fear, worries, concerns, etc., they are not because of my sin, but rather because of the world that I'm living in. And we take those things, according to Philippians 4: 6 and we bring them and lay them before the Lord on a daily basis.

Philippians 4: 6 explains, ...***be anxious about nothing, but in everything, through prayer and supplication, present your request to God, with thanksgiving, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.*** So, whatever it is you wake up with today, you bring it to the Lord and you say, "Lord, here it is. I need to lay this down. It's robbing my peace and I need your help."

And then we do this. We ask him for whatever we need, and we patiently and expectantly wait for his provision. Whether it's finances, relationships, political climate, whatever is robbing our peace, whatever we lack, we ask a loving Father and then we patiently wait and see. What happens if we practice this our eyes will be open to all the amazing ways that God faithfully provides for us on a daily basis and your faith is bolstered.

And then finally, according to that same passage, it says "with thanksgiving." Because when we become hyper focused on that which is robbing our peace, it's all we can see. But when we practice thanksgiving, we recognize that this thing is real and it is hard and it does matter, but when we think about all the things that we're grateful for, all the good things that God is doing in our life, for the sun coming up, for food in my belly, for a great church to attend, for a Sunday with football in the afternoon, the list goes on and on. The beauty of fall in the Ozarks, for my family, for my loved ones. What happens is you set that one thing or handful of things in a proper perspective and God restores peace.

The next thing we need to do is we need to **practice letting go of control**. Psalm 127: 1 says, ***Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.*** In other words, God's in control. He is sovereign and I am not. What I find is when I take his role in my life, it stresses me out because I make a lousy God. So, on a daily basis, we give those things up. "Lord, I'm going to give you control of my life. I can't control outcomes, I can just control my actions." Put off the old self and put on the new self and practice a new way of loving.

The next one is to **set your mind on things above and not on earthly things** from early in this chapter. So, when you find yourself scrolling on your phone and you're getting worked up, guess where your mindset is. It's on earthly things. When you're thinking about the election and the outcome and cities that are burning, you're focused on earthly things. Again, they do matter; I'm not going to minimize those things, but we need to turn our focus to heavenly things. Put your phone away, pick up the Psalms and read and spend time being thankful for all the things God has blessed you with.

And then finally, Ephesians 5: 18. Ask him to fill you with the Spirit. For those of us who place faith in Jesus, we're sealed with the Holy Spirit, but once we've cleansed ourselves of anxiety and sin, the Spirit then fills us up and gives us strength to overcome the challenges in front of us and we're supernaturally granted peace that surpasses all understanding.

Scott McElvain: So, picking up in Verse 16, sometimes, in preparation, there are words that just jump out and the Lord just seems to put on your heart. For me, that would be the first word of Verse 16.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... There are a lot of things that I deny. I have a passcode on my phone, locks on my door. What are the things that I'm letting in? I let my toothpaste do its job

cleaning my teeth. I let the mechanic do the work on my car that needs to be done. And as Shay has mentioned, our cell phones... I am letting my phone be a communication tool for me 24/7. It's by my night stand, in my pocket. So, I think too the thing that we let be voices in our lives are the entertainment, the news, the notifications. Those things are all coming in that I'm letting them come in. And as I focus on that word, I just think to myself... and I believe the Lord has put it on my heart. I am trying to diminish that which is cheap and fleeting that we let in our lives. They are not bad, but if they are out of whack or out of priority or too much, I need to diminish those things that are cheap and fleeting. I need to **allow God's Word to live in me bountifully** for it is rich; it is a treasure trove of truth. We are to go to it as a love letter to us about who God is, who we are, what he has done, is continuing to do, and will do. It is rich. May we diminish those things that are cheap and fleeting and may we dwell upon what is rich.

My boys have gotten obsessed with basketball, baseball, and football cards. There was a time where it was all they thought about, sun up to sun down. They were dwelling on what cards were the best or which one looked the coolest or what trade should I make or how should I keep these protected.

Dustin Rouse puts it like this. "We get most excited about what we dwell on daily." What we dwell on daily, we think about. There is a living aspect to that. May we diminish that which is cheap and may we live bountifully in God's Word. As Shay has mentioned, it is proved well with Psalm 91 in his life. I want to read the last part of Verse 17 for us.

17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

We are thankful, we clothe ourselves in thankfulness. Verse 16 also talks about the things which God's word does for us. ***...teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.***

I forgot to tell you the last of that McDonald's story, Shay. I say that because as I'm listening to *The Virtues of Christ*, as God's word... As I'm studying and hearing God's word, I begin to practice those things. I get up to pay for my McDonald's meal after not getting in line where I thought I won. The gentleman had paid for my meal.

God, you are working on me, you're working on my heart. Lord, I need to be continual and consistent and intentional about clothing myself in your garments, being thankful for the way that he has loved us. You've love me, therefore I love. You've forgiven my, therefore I forgive. May we be a people that are intentional about clothing ourselves in the garments of Christ. That we would love those around us in a time where there is much need for love.

Shay Robbins: Godly people drive big trucks. Before I close, Scott, would you mind admonishing us with a spiritual song?

Scott McElvain: I think we're out of time, aren't we?

Shay Robbins: I'm just kidding. Let me close this way. In Psalm 27:4, David writes... This is one of my favorite passages. ***4 One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.***

As we go before the lord, we trade in our rags for riches in the throne room of God and we're clothed with the righteousness of Christ, which transforms our heart and allows us to love in a new way.

Father, we come to you and I just want to pray over this church body. I want to pray, God, that you would help us to discern truth, to saturate ourselves in it. I pray that you would refresh our love for other people that we don't necessarily agree with. I want to pray that we would be a body of people that are kind and that hold our tongue.

I want to pray, God, that you would help us to trust you regardless of our circumstances and that we would get to experience the peace of Christ that would guard our hearts and our minds.

We pray it all in Jesus' name, Amen