

Kenmore Baptist Church Message Outline July 19, 2015 (John Robertson)
Fruitfulness on the Frontline
Modelling Godly Character - Colossians 3:12-17

The world might see our words and actions but what underpins all of this is our character. Much of what is hidden out of sight influences what is presented to others.

Our character includes things like:

- World view
- Belief system
- Self-discipline
- Core Values
- Sense of Identity
- Emotional Security

Therefore we can't afford to ignore the large proportion of our life that actually influences what others see – it could be our downfall, and for sure will affect our witness.

We see the fruit, we know what kind of tree it is; the *outside* is only a reflection of what's on the *inside*. (Luke 6:43-45)

God puts “being” before “doing”. He prioritises taking care of the inside (our heart), because that will determine what takes place on the outside (our behaviour).

Character is the qualities in us that lead to the expectation of a particular kind of response – whatever the pressure.

Modelling godly character is letting the life of Christ flow in and through us.

New Creatures with New Capacities and New Fuel (Colossians 3:10;
2 Corinthians 5:17).

As we seek to model godly character, we don't do so in our own strength.

Clothed with Christ (Colossians 3:12-17)

God's people are to 'put on' a new set of characteristics which bear the marks of a new humanity recreated in the image of Jesus.

There is intentionality about 'clothing' ourselves, which requires conscious daily decisions about what to wear – clothes which are to be appropriate for our new life in Christ.

1. Put to death your earthly nature with its passions and desires – 'put off' the wrong clothing (Colossians 3:5-9).

We put to death the manifestations of our sinful nature through confession and prayer, and we re-align our thinking with His. We pray for help to walk in step with the Spirit and by doing so we have a part in shaping our character.

2. Live by the Spirit – ‘put on’ the right clothing (Colossians 3:1-4; 12-15).

Two main principles of being clothed with Christ:

A) Living the characteristics/qualities/virtues of Christ

Most of the qualities imply the significance of relationship.

Compassion / Kindness / Humility / Gentleness / Patience / Self-control /
Forgiveness / Love.

These qualities Paul invites us to put on are not meant to be done from our best efforts. They are qualities that are acquired by spiritual means.

B) Following the pattern of Christ

Our life and our relationships are marked by Christ, and motivated by Christ.

Jesus’ followers want to keep Jesus central. He provides the strength and motivation for how we clothe ourselves. His characteristics become our characteristics, His forgiveness is the basis of our forgiveness, His peace rules our hearts, and His word dwells in us richly.

- To ‘put on’ and not ‘put off’ results in hypocrisy
- To ‘put off’ without ‘putting on’ leads to powerlessness

The Christian life is about *presence-based fruitfulness* NOT principle-based standards of behaviour!

Christ's grace and love frees us from the power of sin and the hamster wheel of legalism, our vain efforts to try and do the right thing in our own strength. Christ's love graces us with that deep assurance of His love which gives us joy and peace and allows us to be others-centred.

If people only see a small portion of who we are then let them see the best – let us model godly character on our frontline. That will only come about when we allow Holy Spirit to re-model our character. Allowing Jesus to live in and through us will lead to building those inner qualities in us that lead to the expectation of a particular kind of response – a Holy Spirit fruit response - whatever the pressure.

Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of someone who has modelled an aspect of godly character to you? Might you encourage them by telling them?
2. Can you think of ways in which you have modelled godly character on your frontline?
3. Who are the people, what are the situations where you know you've needed God's Spirit to help you?
4. What are the situations where you wish you'd called on God to help you? Where you wish you could have been a bit different? Where you hope you could be a bit different next time?
5. Which item of clothing do you feel in particular need of right now?