



# Set Your Minds on Things Above

By Shari Miller

Share with a partner or the small group the last time you cleaned out your closet or chest of drawers. Did it take longer than you thought it would? Was it hard to let some items of clothing go?

During this Bible study, we will look primarily at Colossians 3:1-17. We are reminded in Colossians 1 and 2 that we are God's own dearly loved children given new life in Christ through Holy Baptism. In Colossians 3, we are urged in practical ways to live lives worthy of Christ and to give Him all glory and honor.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Dear Loving Lord, Thank You for creating us and giving us life. However, we confess that we sin often and deserve only Your punishment and death. But because of Your great love, You sent Your Son Jesus to be our Savior through His perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection. He fulfilled Your plan of salvation completely. Because He lives, we, too, can look forward to eternal life in heaven. Thank You for giving us the Holy Spirit Who gives us new life through the cleansing waters of Holy Baptism. Through Your Word and Sacraments, our faith is strengthened and we are enabled to live lives that glorify You — above all. Be with us as we study Your Word. In Jesus' all powerful name we pray. Amen.

## Focus

Sometimes when I decide to clean out my clothes or even to change my clothes between seasons (warm and cold!), I find that I seem to have to get my mind focused on the task at hand. I dedicate a time period to do the work of keeping or discarding clothes, and look forward to my ultimate goal: a clean closet, filled with functional and fashionable clothing to wear for the months to come. However, sometimes I lose focus or get lost in memories that the sight of well-worn clothing invokes. I find it hard to get rid of the clothing that makes me feel comfortable, but is really ready for the rag pile. Time flies by and my clean-closet goal has not been reached. It's time to focus once again. Perhaps you've run into the same difficulty.

Read **Colossians 3:1-4**. Paul begins this section of God's Word with the phrase, *If then you have been raised with Christ . . .* How are we *raised with Christ* according to **Colossians 2:12-15**? \_\_\_\_\_

When the word "above" is used in **Colossians 3:1-2**, is it referring to spatial or spiritual things? \_\_\_\_\_

**FAITH TALK:** Make a group list of things *that are above* (**Colossians 3:1-2**). See also **Romans 5:2** and **Hebrews 12:2**. \_\_\_\_\_

**IF TIME PERMITS:** What does the phrase *right hand of God* (**Colossians 3:1**) symbolize? See also **Psalms 110:1-2** and **Ephesians 1:19-23**. \_\_\_\_\_

## Clean Out the Closet

Read **Colossians 3:5-9**. List how our earthly life apart from God is characterized in these verses (especially verses 5, 8, 9). \_\_\_\_\_

How does God treat this kind of life (verse 6)? See **Romans 1:18; 6:23a**. \_\_\_\_\_

Can we of our own volition *put off the old self* (verse 9) — or our old clothes, so to speak? \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not? See **Ephesians 2:1-3** and **John 14:6**. \_\_\_\_\_

**FAITH TALK:** Why do we find ourselves wanting to keep on our old comfortable, dirty, and worn clothes — our pet sins or sinful lifestyles? \_\_\_\_\_

## New Clothes

Through Jesus' perfect life, suffering, death and resurrection, we are given God's forgiveness for sins and the hope of eternal life. He gives us His Holy Spirit Who creates and sustains our faith in the Good News of salvation in Jesus. What tools (means) does the Spirit use to transform our lives? See **1 Peter 3:21a**; **Mark 14:22–25**; and **Hebrews 4:12**. \_\_\_\_\_

Read **Colossians 3:10–17**. Put on then are the words used in Colossians 3:12. Read **Galatians 3:27**. What happens as God works in us through Baptism? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the beautiful images of Baptism shown in **Isaiah 61:10** and **Zechariah 3:1–5**. \_\_\_\_\_

**FAITH TALK:** At Baptisms, special clothing is often worn. Share with a partner or the entire group, special clothes that have been used for Baptisms in your family. Why is that baptismal garment special? \_\_\_\_\_

"Before the dawning day Let sin's dark deeds be gone, The sinful self be put away, The new self now put on" (*LSB* 331:5). In Colossians 3:12–17, practical guidance is given as we put on our new clothes of righteousness in Christ and are given the gifts of the Spirit that we cannot make or purchase. List all the Christ-like qualities that we, by the Spirit, strive for as Christians in these verses. \_\_\_\_\_

What difference do these new clothes from Christ make in your day-to-day life? \_\_\_\_\_

**FAITH TALK:** Read **1 Peter 2:9**. As God's chosen one (Colossians 3:12), how can you proclaim what He has done in your life? \_\_\_\_\_

**IF TIME PERMITS: Colossians 3:16** says we are to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The Psalms were most often used during worship in the Old Testament. See the

following passages for examples of New Testament hymns: **Colossians 1:15–20**; **Ephesians 5:14**; **Philippians 2:6–11**; and **1 Timothy 3:16**. \_\_\_\_\_

**FAITH TALK:** Share with your partner or the small group a favorite hymn and why. Discuss why music is an important part of the Christian life. \_\_\_\_\_

*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* (Colossians 3:17). What does the word "everything" mean to you in this context? \_\_\_\_\_

How many times does Paul mention "thankfulness" in **Colossians 3:15–17**? \_\_\_\_\_ Why does Paul mention being thankful more than once? \_\_\_\_\_

**FAITH TALK:** What are ways that you can specifically show your thanks to God for all He has done for you, especially your salvation and new life in Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

In summary, how would you explain to a friend these words: *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth* (**Colossians 3:2**)? \_\_\_\_\_

## FAITH WALK:

1. Pray that the Lord will help to set your mind on things above.
2. Thank God that He has given you a new life and Christ's new clothes through your Baptism.
3. Pray that the Holy Spirit will enable you to share the Good News of Jesus with those who need to hear.
4. Thank God for His many gifts and ask the Holy Spirit to help you to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** (sing or speak together) "Now Thank We All Our God" (*LSB* #895; *LW* #443; *TLH* #36).

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