



Home Group Discussion Guide

February 20-26 – The Soul of a Community – Forgive One Another

Devotion: If I see a picture of a woman donned in a parka and holding a baby bundled so well that his little face isn't even showing, right away I can know that they aren't residents of some Caribbean Island. Building upon this notion, if I see a burly man wearing overalls and dirt-clad boots and whose hands are calloused and well-muscled from obvious years of strenuous labor, I can be really sure his occupation is nowhere near Wall Street. To some degree, appearances are revealing.

In chapter 3 of his letter to the Colossians, Paul is giving us clear instruction on how to represent not where we are from or what job we perform, but *to Whom we belong*. He's using metaphor to transform conduct into clothing when he says in verses 12 and 14, "Put on . . ." In essence, he's wanting our behavior to identify us as Christ followers to a watching world. He's encouraging us to let this behavior be the driving force of our relationships—for our own good, for the good of others, and for the good of the Church. For what better reflects the truth about a person's (or a community's) identity than their actions? So, much like a bundled mother and child and a burly, booted man can reveal geographic and vocational information, our conduct has a lot to communicate about our Christian identity and purpose in the world.

Because of God's actions, we can be truly assured of his character. Paul lets us know its personal. Every article of "clothing" that we are to put on is an action that God has first performed with each one of us. So somewhere within ourselves, we have direct experience from which to draw upon as we interact with each other and with our neighbors. Not only will our behavior, or our "clothing," as Paul gives, reveal God to an ignorant and blinded world, but it will strengthen the present members of the body of Christ as we become more like the One who first loved us.

Scripture – Read Colossians 3:12-14

- What first-hand experience comes to mind when you think about these articles of "clothing?" Pick one to share. How does it motivate you to be this way to others?
- Choose a particular piece of clothing and reflect upon the ways a community suffers or is anemic without it. How might a bad "appearance" affect up-and-coming generations?
- What is it about love that gathers all things into perfect harmony? Why is this important for relationships?

How is it with your soul? (*Go around and share as you look back to the "good and the bad" of this week and then look forward to what you can do or where you want to see God move this week.*)

- Where have you seen God this week?
- Where have you struggled this week?
- How can you be open to God/the Holy Spirit this week?

Prayers