To everything there is a season series: study 2

a time to mend (Colossians 3:12-15)

## BEFORE THE LESSON

We’re reading from Paul’s letter to the Colossians in this study. Paul is reminding this group of mostly Gentile Christians that there is no need to add to the good news of Jesus. When you have Jesus, you have it all! In the portion we’re reading, Paul writes about how we are to interact with our brothers and sisters in Christ so that we might mend relationships instead of tearing them apart. Take time to slowly and reflectively read this passage a few times before you lead this study.

## STARTING THE LESSON

In this study, you will be looking at four verses in Paul’s letter to the Colossians (Colossians 3:12-15) that list 10 character traits we need to cultivate in order to be in right and healthy relationships with one another. I suggest that you start your study by reading through the short passage twice (possibly in two different translations). On the second read through everyone can be listening (and maybe jotting down) those 10 character traits that Paul mentions.

## starter question

**TIPS TO SHARE WITH LEADERS**

We have included more questions than you are likely able to ask during the group meeting, so choose several of your favorites ahead of time and feel free to focus on those.

* What do you think of when you think of the phrase “mending fences?” Why would someone need to mend fences with a loved one?
* Name a character trait in a loved one that you really admire.

## Opening PrAyer

Holy Spirit, come and speak to us today. Guide our reading and discussions together and use this time we spend together to grow us in our lives with you.

## Discussion questions

### Question 1

* In verse 12, Paul calls the Colossian church “God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved.” This is what the children of Israel were often called in the Old Testament. The Colossian church was mostly made up of Gentiles. How do you think it made them feel to be called “God’s chosen people?” How does it make you feel?

Answers will vary.

### Question 2

**BIBLE PASSAGE REFERENCE**

**Colossians 3:12–15 (NIV)**

12Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience**. 13**Bear** with each other and **forgive** one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on **love**, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the **peace** of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be **thankful**.

* Paul goes on to list five qualities right away that we are to clothe ourselves with. What are those qualities?

Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience

### Question 3

* What do you think it means to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience?

Answers will vary. We are to exhibit these qualities in our lives. This is a sure sign that we are followers of Jesus.

### Question 4

* Three of these qualities are also in the list of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Can you name the 3 that are in both lists?

Kindness, gentleness, patience

### Question 5

* Which of these five character traits do you most struggle with? How has God helped you with this over the years? Let’s take a few minutes to pray that God would help us grow in these areas. (You can pray together aloud or silently.)

Answers will vary.

### Question 6

* In verse 13, Paul mentions two more character traits that we should “put on.” What are they?

Bear with each other and forgive one another.

### Question 7

* Give an example in your life of someone “bearing with” you. How did it make you feel for them to bear with you?

Answers will vary.

### Question 8

* What steps do you take to forgive someone? Is there someone in your life that you’ve had a hard time forgiving? While we’re on the subject of forgiveness, what is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?

*Forgiveness is an act between you and God. Reconciliation is an act between you, God, and the other person. Forgiveness is a healing exercise for you when there can’t be reconciliation. Reconciliation can only happen when both you and the other party are willing to humble yourselves, repent of your sin, forgive one another as needed, and work to right past wrongs.*

### Question 9

* In verse 14, Paul lists the 8th character trait that we need to put on as Christians. What is it?

Love. And Paul says that this binds all these other traits together and produces unity.

### Question 10

* How does love bind everything together in perfect unity?

Paul considers love to be the supreme virtue. If we love our neighbor as ourselves then we will also model compassion, humility, kindness, etc. “Love,” Paul says in Romans 13:10, “does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.” (NLT) Other answers are also possible.

### Question 11

* In Colossians 3:15, we read the last 2 traits we are to put on. What are they? Can you give examples of yourself or someone else in your life modeling these two qualities of character?

Peace and thankfulness. Personal examples will vary.

### Question 12

* Let’s review what the 10 traits are that Paul mentions in this short passage. How can you practice putting on these traits this week?

Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bear with each other, forgive one another, love, peace, thankfulness. Answers will vary for the second part of the question.

## Prayer ministry

* Take a few minutes to sit quietly together and ask the Lord which traits you personally need to work on in the coming weeks. What quality does he want you to pay particular attention to? Are there particular people God is calling you to practice these qualities of character towards? After observing 2-3 minutes of silence, give everyone an opportunity to share what the Lord revealed to the group.
* Divide into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another to put on these traits.

**Note:** This study was written as an act of service by Denise Birkhoff.