

**4/27/06**

**Encouragement for Today**

“Dressed for Success”

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**Key Verse:**

Colossians 3:5-14, “Put to death therefore whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived, But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved children, clothe yourselves with compassion, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” (NIV)

**Devotion:**

Wow! Talk about power verses for our lives! Recently our pastor was teaching from these exact verses, and I was struck by the clear exhortation they offer each one of us as believers in Christ. In my job I am required to wear a uniform, each morning I don a white lab coat over my black slacks and blouse. I never really appreciated the freedom in wearing the same thing each day until I began this job. Forever gone are the mornings filled with tears and frustration as I hunted through my overflowing closet, only to find nothing to wear. Now I experience freedom to focus on my job instead of myself, as I wear what is required.

Just as my physical job requires me to wear a uniform, the life I lead as a believer requires me to wear a “spiritual” uniform. Before we can put on this new “spiritual” uniform, verse five impresses the importance of beginning our wardrobe change by removing the “filthy rags” of our old sinful nature and putting those old behaviors to death. Then we are encouraged to put on the seven virtuous “undergarments” of this spiritual uniform.

The first virtuous undergarment is living in the reality that as believers in Christ we are chosen, holy and dearly loved. Secondly, we are to clothe ourselves with compassion, as we enter into the suffering of others, and third, our acts of kindness will thwart evil in the lives of others. The fourth virtuous undergarment is humility, as we live our lives in awareness of God’s grace. The fifth undergarment is gentleness, as we are gracious toward others. The last two virtuous undergarments are patience and forgiveness. God is so patient with me and is faithful to forgive my confessed sins, so in turn I must be willing to extend patience to others, even those who are difficult to deal with. I must be willing to forgive those who have harmed me irregardless if they ever apologize or ever ask for forgiveness.

Verse 14 explains that as we put on these seven virtuous undergarments, we will create the perfect foundation for the outer garment of love which binds all of the seven virtuous undergarments in to perfect unity. This outer garment of love identifies us with the one we follow, Christ.

If you want your life to show others that you follow Christ, I want to encourage you to take a look at your spiritual closet. Is it filled with outdated attitudes and behaviors that just don’t fit your life as a believer? Get rid of them! Are there bad habits hidden in the dark recesses of your spiritual closet that need to be discarded? Get rid of them! Perhaps the unflattering accessories of impatience and unforgiveness need to be removed and destroyed. Get rid of them! As women I believe we all want to dress for success, but only as we put on the virtuous undergarments are we able to wear the outer garment of love. Friends, if you’re ready to be dressed for success

every day, I want to challenge you to completely overhaul your spiritual wardrobe. Get rid of anything and everything that doesn't fit your life as a believer and then experience the freedom that comes from wearing the correct "undergarments" and the outer garment of love.

**My Prayer for Today:**

Heavenly Father, reveal the sinful areas in my life that need to be removed. Help me to put on the virtuous undergarments spelled out in these verses and then to wear the outer garment of love, for my good and Your glory. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

**Application Steps:**

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal those items that are keeping you in bondage to your former sinful life.

Write each one down in your journal and commit to removing them from your life.

**Reflection Points:**

Of the seven virtuous undergarments mentioned in these verses, which one is the most difficult to control?

Why do you think you struggle with that one?

How can you find ways, or persons, to hold you accountable?

**Power Verses:**

2 Corinthians 5:15, "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." (NIV)

Philippians 2:14-16, "Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain." (NIV)

Colossians 3:2-3, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." (NIV)

**Additional Resources:**

[The Ultimate Makeover](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_ultimateMakeover.htm), by Sharon Jaynes

[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_ultimateMakeover.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_ultimateMakeover.htm)

[Sandpaper People](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_sandpaperPeople.htm), by Mary Southerland

[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_sandpaperPeople.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_sandpaperPeople.htm)

[At the Feet of Ordinary Women](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_atTheFeet.htm), by Angie Conrad, et al

[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_atTheFeet.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_atTheFeet.htm)