

The Deep Dive — Lesson 13: Colossians 3:5-11

COLOSSIANS 3:5-11 (WEB) · SMALL-GROUP LESSON · DIGDEEPER.AI

The Big Idea

The clothes are already changed if you belong to Christ, so the killing off of the old junk isn't you trying to become somebody new, it's you living like the person God already says you are.

Opening Lines

Paul just used a violent word, and I don't want us to soften it. He says put your old life to death. Not manage it, not put it on a leash. Kill it. But before you brace for a lecture on willpower, watch where he grounds it, because the whole thing turns on one sentence you almost skip.

Before You Teach

- Goal: Get the room to feel that they've already changed clothes in Christ, so putting sin to death is stepping into who they are, not auditioning for who they hope to be. Every person leaves naming one old garment they're taking off this week.
- If you're short on time, cut: The full walk through both vice lists item by item. Read them, feel their weight, but don't turn the lesson into a moral inventory or you'll bury the 'already true of you' that makes killing sin possible.
- Where the moment lives: In the gap between 'put to death' and 'you have put off the old man.' The moment someone realizes the burial already happened and they're just making it real, the grinding turns into freedom.
- Your prep: Do the drill on yourself first: pick the one sin you're most tempted to manage instead of kill, and sit in it before you teach. If you haven't felt the violence of that word this week, the room won't either.

Run It In Your Setting

The same lesson, sequenced three ways. Pick the one that fits your group and your clock.

CLASSROOM · ~20 PEOPLE · 45 MINUTES

Coat opening (4 min) → read 3:5-11 aloud, teach 'put to death' / nekrosate with the fist image (8 min) → the hinge: verse 5 command grounded in verse 9 already-done (8 min) → questions 1, 2, and 4 as a group, hands up (14 min) → teach 'Christ is all, and in all' and hold your counted silence (4 min) → question 5 commitments out loud, close in prayer over what was named (7 min). Transformation lives in the verse 5-verse 9 hinge; make sure the room feels the corpse isn't fighting back. Cut first: item-by-item walk through

both vice lists.

SMALL GROUP · ~8 PEOPLE · 60 MINUTES

Shared-admission opening, each names a failed habit (8 min) → read passage, teach 'put to death' with fist image (8 min) → the hinge, verse 5 grounded in verse 9 (8 min) → questions 1 through 4, letting the verse 11 label question breathe (22 min) → teach the keepable line, hold silence (4 min) → question 5 commitments out loud, prayer over the exact things named (10 min). Transformation lives in question 4 for this room — the labels confession — and in the out-loud commitments. Cut first: openings shorten to two names; then question 3.

COFFEE · 2-3 FRIENDS · 30 MINUTES

Sharp-question opening: becoming new vs. living up to who you already are (5 min) → read 3:5-11 together (3 min) → the one thing: verse 5 command grounded in verse 9, teach it plainly (7 min) → questions 2 and 5, personal and direct (11 min) → say 'Christ is all, and in all' and let it sit, then pray briefly over what each person named (4 min). Transformation lives in question 5 — each person names one garment and one Tuesday moment. Cut first: skip question 2's group discussion and go straight to naming commitments.

One Thing Deeply

This is a habit for every lesson you'll ever teach, and this week we drill it deliberately at level three. Remember week 3, where you picked one thing and refused to rush past it. Level three raises the bar: don't just teach one thing deeply, plan the exact SILENCE around it. Choose the single most keepable line in this passage — 'Christ is all, and in all' — and before you teach, decide the precise moment you'll stop talking after you say it, and how many seconds you'll hold the quiet. Write the second count in your margin. The discipline isn't finding the line; it's trusting it enough to shut up and let it land without rescuing the room from the stillness.

Why This Passage Matters

Most people in your room are exhausted from trying to become a better version of themselves. They've made resolutions, downloaded the app, started the diet of the soul, and every January they're back where they started, more tired and more ashamed. Paul walks straight into that room and does something they've never been told. He commands them to kill their sin — and then he tells them the person capable of doing it already exists, because God already made them new. The old self isn't on life support waiting to be defeated. It's dead. What they're fighting is a corpse that keeps standing up. That reframes everything. This is not self-improvement with Jesus sprinkled on top. It's living out a verdict already handed down. And the ending is where it becomes stunning: strip off the old life and every label the world sorted people by comes off with it — Greek and Jew, slave and free, the respectable and the outsider nobody wanted near them. What's left is

one new humanity where Christ is everything and in everyone. You get to hand people both the hardest and the most freeing news they'll hear all week, in the same breath. That's a privilege.

Catch the Fire First

Before you stand in front of anyone, do the exercise yourself. Take one item off Paul's two lists — the tongue sin you'd rather not admit is yours, the anger you've been calling 'just being honest,' the small lie you told this week to save face. Name it out loud when you're alone. Then say the sentence over it: 'That belongs to the old man, and the old man is dead in Christ.' Notice whether you actually believe it or whether you're bracing to earn your way out. If you catch yourself grinding, that's the exact feeling half your room lives in. Teach from the place where you've felt the difference between managing your sin and burying it — not from theory.

Bring Your Own Story

- PROMPT: A time you tried to white-knuckle a habit into submission and it kept coming back — and what changed when you stopped 'managing' it.
- PROMPT: A moment you caught yourself treating someone as a category (a label, a type) before you saw them as a person Christ died for.
- SAMPLE (polished vs real): Polished — 'God taught me that my identity is secure in Him.' Real — 'I spent two years apologizing for the same short fuse and hating myself every time, until someone asked me why I was fighting so hard to become somebody I already was.'
- GUARDRAIL: Keep it one notch rawer than comfortable, but not raw — tell the version you've already made peace with, not the wound you're still bleeding from.

Three Ways to Open

CLASSROOM: "Hold up a jacket or a coat where the room can see it. Ask: what does this tell you about a person before they say a word — their job, their money, their status? Then read them verse 9: 'you have put off the old man, and have put on the new man.' Tell them in Paul's world, changing clothes meant changing who you were, publicly and for good. We're going to find out what you're already wearing."

Concrete object anchors an abstract idea

SMALL GROUP: "Go around and each name one habit you've tried and failed to break — no fixing, no advice, just name it. Then say: Paul's about to tell us to kill our old life, and every one of us just proved we can't do it by trying harder. So watch what he says first, because it's the part we always skip."

A shared honest admission lowers the room's guard

COFFEE: "Ask across the table: when you're trying to be a better person, do you feel like you're becoming someone new, or living up to someone you already are? Sit with

their answer. Then say — Paul says it's the second one, and it changes how hard the whole fight feels."

One sharp question opens the whole passage

Teaching the Word

The word to teach is the very first command: 'put to death' — in Greek, nekrosate. It's the verb for making something a corpse, for executing. Not tame, not manage, not tolerate at a polite distance. Kill it. Here's the physical image: make a fist and squeeze it as hard as you can, holding tension, arm shaking. That's how most people fight sin — pure grip, pure strain, and the second they let go it springs back. Now Paul's word isn't 'squeeze tighter.' It's 'this thing is already dead, stop feeding it.' The killing isn't manufacturing a new you by force; it's refusing to keep resurrecting the old you. And notice the tense — it's a daily act, taken up every morning, not a wound Christ left you to admire. You put to death because you've already been buried and raised. Then, at the end, the whole passage lands on one line, and this is where you stop and count your seconds: 'Christ is all, and in all.'

Discussion Questions

1. Read verse 5 slowly. What's the difference between managing a sin and putting it to death? Which one is your actual daily approach?

Coaching note: Let people be honest that they mostly manage. Don't rush to fix it — the honesty is the point, and it sets up the grace in verse 9.

If it stalls: Name a habit you've been 'keeping under control' for years without ever killing it. Just one word — what is it?

2. Paul gives the command in verse 5 but grounds it in verse 9: 'you have put off the old man.' Why does the order matter so much?

Coaching note: This is the hinge of the whole lesson. If they get 'who you are before what you do,' the passage opens. Draw it out; don't hand it to them.

If it stalls: Would you fight harder to keep a job you already have, or to get one you're still hoping for? How does that map onto verse 9?

3. The second list is all tongue and temper — anger, malice, slander, shameful speech. Why do you think Paul puts those right next to sexual immorality and greed, like they're the same category of thing?

Coaching note: Watch the room realize the 'respectable' sins of speech get equal billing. Don't let anyone off the hook with 'well, at least I don't do the big ones.'

If it stalls: Which list do you privately think is worse — the body one or the mouth one? Be honest, and then ask why Paul doesn't rank them.

4. Verse 11 tears down every label: Greek, Jew, slave, free, even 'Scythian,' the worst outsider a Greek could imagine. What label do you still quietly use to sort people — and what does 'Christ is all, and in all' do to it?

Coaching note: This is where a live detour may erupt. If it's pulling toward the text and the quiet

ones are leaning in, follow it and cut your outline. If two people start relitigating politics while the room glazes, name it kindly and get back to the verse.

If it stalls: Finish this sentence honestly: 'I catch myself assuming people who ___ are ____.' What comes to mind?

5. If the old man is already dead and you're already clothed in the new, what is one 'old garment' you'll deliberately take off this week — and what would taking it off actually look like on Tuesday?

Coaching note: Push for Tuesday-level specificity. 'Be more patient' is not a commitment. 'Pause three seconds before I answer my kid' is. Don't let them leave in the abstract.

If it stalls: Name the one moment this week you're most likely to slip — a person, a time of day, a text thread. What's the small thing you'll do differently right there?

Questions You May Hear

"Doesn't 'put to death' contradict grace? Isn't this just works?"

No — Paul puts the command after the fact. Verse 9 says you've already put off the old self and put on the new. You're not killing sin to become new; you're killing it because you already are new. The verdict comes first, the effort follows.

"Who were the Scythians, and why single them out?"

In the Greek mind the Scythians were the most savage outsiders imaginable, the very edge of the civilized world. Paul names them on purpose: if even that label comes off in Christ, then no division survives. It's his way of saying the wall between people is completely gone.

"What does 'renewed after the image of his Creator' mean?"

It reaches back to Genesis, where God made humanity in his own image and sin defaced it. Christ is himself the image of the invisible God, and in him what was lost in Adam is being restored. Redemption isn't a fresh start on the old project; it's the old project brought to its true end.

"The clothing language — is that connected to baptism?"

Yes. In the ancient world changing clothes publicly declared you'd become someone new — a freed slave got new clothing, a boy coming of age put on the man's toga. Early baptism echoed exactly this: down into the water, up and clothed afresh. Paul is reaching for an image his readers felt in their bones.

For Experienced Leaders

- When you say 'Christ is all, and in all,' resist the urge to explain it. You've prepped your silence count — trust it. The line does the work the second you stop talking.
- Don't let the vice lists become a confession booth or a ranking contest. Read them, feel the weight, and move fast to verse 9. The lists are the diagnosis, not the lesson.

- If someone confesses a real sin out loud in the room, don't fix it and don't dwell on it. Say 'thank you for saying that' and let the passage's own grace land. Your calm signals it's safe to be honest.

Landing the Lesson

Commitments: Go around and have each person say out loud the one old garment they're taking off this week and the specific Tuesday moment where they'll do it. Out loud — a named commitment carries weight a private thought never will.

Close by praying out loud over the exact things people just named — the specific short fuse, the specific lie, the label someone confessed. Don't reach for a written prayer; naming their actual words back to God, and thanking him that the old self is already dead in Christ, is the whole point.

If you run out of time: If the room only reaches question 2 and really wrestles with 'who you are before what you do,' stay there. That's the hinge of the passage; you'll have taught it well even if you never reach verse 11.

Midweek follow-up: Midweek, text each person one line: 'How'd Tuesday go with the garment you named?' Nothing more — just let them know the commitment was heard and remembered.

Free at digdeeper.ai/devotionals/colossians/3-5-11/lesson

Handout

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During the lesson:

- One habit you've tried to break by trying harder, and it keeps coming back:
- Verse 9 says you've already 'put off the old man.' In your own words, what does it change to know the old self is already dead, not still fighting?
- Finish honestly: 'I catch myself assuming people who _____ are _____. ' What does 'Christ is all, and in all' do to that?
- The one old garment you're taking off this week:
- The specific Tuesday moment — the person, the time, the place — where you'll actually take it off:

Take-home actions:

- At home tonight, pick the moment you're most likely to say something cutting — when the kids won't listen, when your spouse says the wrong thing — and decide now to stay silent for three seconds before you answer. That pause is where the old habit dies.
- Name the small lie you're tempted to tell today — the excuse for being late, the 'I'm fine' when you're not — and tell the true version instead, even when it costs you a little face.
- When someone irritates you today, in traffic or in a text thread, name that person out loud to God and ask him to bless them before you've had time to cool off.

You are being renewed after the image of your Creator, and God finishes what he starts in his children.