



# small groups

*Discussion Guide*



## HOPE FOR BROKEN FAMILIES

Col. 3:1-17

### Front Porch

*(Ice Breaker – 5 minutes)*

#### Discuss

- Confession Time: In keeping with the fashion theme of Andy's sermon, fess up to your most embarrassing wardrobe decisions. Parachute pants? Ruffled tuxedo shirts? What's the ugliest things you've ever worn?
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### Sitting Room

*(Lesson – 50 minutes)*

#### CHANGING CLOTHES

**Read Col. 3:1-17**

It's appropriate that Andy used Col. 3 for his text on the same day we celebrated baptism. The church at Colossae would have understood the talk about clothing to relate to baptism. In ancient baptism, people would strip off their outer garments before entering the water, then be baptized, then walk out of the water and put on different garments. It was a symbolic representation of their new identity and new status. As Paul

wrote to the Corinthians, "If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

### **Discussion**

Notice the lists of sins and virtues in this passage. There are two lists of sins to "put off" (3:5, and 3:8-9) and one list of virtues to "put on" (3:12-14). Write out the contents of each of these lists.

Paul's first list is largely personal or private sins. The second list, however, is entirely about sins that occur in community. So then in verse 12, where Paul starts to discuss the positive version of our Christian behavior – the things to "put on" to replace the things we "take off" – we would expect him to give two more lists – one personal and one communal. But he doesn't. All of his exhortation is communal. In other words, when Paul thinks of sin that needs to be put to death, he lists both personal and corporate sins: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed, anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive language. But when he thinks of the virtues that Christians should cultivate to replace those sins, he thinks exclusively in terms of community: compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, love. Paul doesn't say, "Be free of sin so you can love your brother." He says, "Love your brother and you will be free of sin."

### **Discussion**

- Read 2 Cor. 5:17-20, Rom. 5:6-11, and Luke 6:27-31
- How do these passages relate to the idea of "putting off" and "putting on"?

## **FAMILY FASHION**

### **Read Col. 3:1-17 again, this time in the Message**

*(Note: if you don't have a copy of the message, it's available for free on BibleGateway.com)*

Andy described 3 kinds of "family fashions" and chose a fashion icon to represent each.

#### *1. The Heavenly Family – Pierre Balmain, the tailor to Katharine Hepburn*

This is the ideal family of God's original intent – the kind of loving unity we'll experience in heaven. Andy used two examples: Adam and Eve, and Jonathan and Sarah Edwards. But we know that neither of those families was perfect. There has never been a heavenly family on Earth.

## Discussion

- Name a family you look up to. What do you think they're doing well?

### 2. *The Hurting Family* – Nicola Formichetti, the tailor to Lady Gaga

This is the brokenness of family life that we all live with. Families can be ugly and frightening. Eugene Peterson wrote: "A search of Scripture turns up one rather surprising truth: there are no exemplary families. Not a single family is portrayed in Scripture in such a way so as to evoke admiration in us. There are many family stories, there is considerable reference to family life, and there is sound counsel to guide the growth of families, but not a single model family for anyone to look up to in either awe or envy." We all come from broken homes because we were all begat by sinners.

## Discussion

Andy mentioned the brokenness in his own family but insisted, "That's none of your business." But rest assured, Andy shares that brokenness with his small group. In a large group like the Sunday service, it can seem out of place to "air dirty laundry." But what is unseemly in a large group must be welcome in our small groups.

- If you're ready, share one thing that was "broken" or "hurting" about your childhood home.

*(Note to leaders: since this is the first week of the session, your group may not be ready to share about their childhood, especially if it was particularly hurtful. Try to offer them the opportunity to share without pressure to do so.)*

### 3. *The Healing Family* – JC Penney

This is the family who invites Jesus to heal their brokenness. The gospel is that Jesus Christ came to rescue and renew that which was lost and broken, and that starts with our families.

"The way you help the world is you start with your own family."

– Mother Teresa

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# Kitchen

*(Application – 5 minutes)*

Andy recommended three steps to get our families on the road to healing.

1. Serve others in your family wholeheartedly.
2. Forgive others in your family completely.
3. Love others in your family consistently.

Serve, forgive, and love – the very things Jesus did for us on the cross. This week, practice those three things. First, pray about ways to serve, forgive and love your family. Then do it! Next week's discussion guide will include an opportunity for you to report how you served, forgave, and loved the members of your family.

**Close in prayer.**