

## Wrap up well! Colossians 3: 12-17

It was the great Lakeland walker and writer Alfred Wainwright who said:  
“There's no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing.”

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” The description seems perfect on a day like today when it is so wet, dank and miserable. Put on your layers!

But what goes into those layers? If you are layering up for going out in the great outdoors, it’s really important that you choose wisely. Your favourite cotton T-shirt or denim jeans will simply absorb any water and leave you wet, rubbed raw and rather miserable. We are blessed in our modern world with some amazing, breathable fabrics which, if carefully chosen, will see us through from a warm, sunny stroll to a tough uphill hike where hailstones come at you slantwise.



God’s people are also called to layer up with some very special, vital qualities, which will help the church community to grow securely. Think of them as the base layers: layers of compassion, kindness, gentleness, patience.

Compassion is the expression of our fellow feeling with others. Understanding the pressures, hopes and fears of other people is vital if we are to respond with kindness, meeting their deepest needs and respecting them. If we are kind to others, we will treat them gently, not rushing to get a desired outcome, but bearing with them.

But the really important detail is that top layer: “And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” We can practise being kind and learn to be gentle with others, but without love, there is something missing.

This is the love which transforms all our relationships – the most precious gift of all. The Summary of the Law which we use on occasions to introduce our prayer of Confession, calls us to turn to God and to love him with all our hearts: and not only hearts, but all our souls, mind and strength. This isn’t always easy, but God loves us to come to ask him for help, to enable him to transform us in ways we can hardly imagine as we wrap ourselves in his love.

And it is from that focus on God's love and knowing that we are deeply loved that we can then love others. Love transforms us from without and within. It enables us to be compassionate, kind, gentle and patient when our human capacity to be those things is utterly exhausted.

As the weather becomes fiercer and winter approaches, let's layer up, with love as our outer garment, bringing hope and comfort to others.

What Are You wearing?

What are you wearing?



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

**Colossians 3:12-14**

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