With the People Closest to Us

Week 9 | Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Colossians 3:12–17 | November 8, 2026

Use this guide on your own or with a group. If you are on your own, write down what you notice. In a group, talk through the questions and leave room for quiet reflection.

Begin with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you receive the life Christ gives and notice how that life takes shape with the people you already encounter.

Read and notice

Read Colossians 3:1–17. Mark every phrase that describes what God has already done, then circle "therefore," "one another," "one body," "word," and "whatever." Read Deuteronomy 6:4–9. Notice where God's words are placed and where they travel. What movement do you see?

Begin with the life you have received

In Colossians 3:1–11, what has happened to believers with Christ? What belongs to the old life, and what is being made new? Why does Paul begin there before saying what anyone should do?

Put on what belongs to the new life

Read verses 12–14 slowly. Which words name an identity God gives? Which words describe the clothing that fits that identity? Think about people who know you well. Which of these qualities would they recognize in the way you respond under pressure?

Verse 13 assumes real complaints. How does "as the Lord forgave you" place grace before our response without making the wrong unreal? Why do you think Paul places love over all the other clothing?

Let Christ form a people

In verses 15–16, what is Christ's peace meant to govern? Where is Christ's word meant to dwell? Who teaches, admonishes, sings, and gives thanks? What kind of people might these practices be forming?

How could receiving the word, practicing peace, speaking truth, singing, and giving thanks together reshape the reactions people carry into the rest of the week?

Follow the movement into ordinary places

Colossians 3:17 moves to "whatever you do, in word or deed." Deuteronomy 6 moves from the heart to conversation, home, road, rest, rising, doorposts, and gates. Where do both passages refuse to separate devotion to God from ordinary life?

The church gathers to be formed and is sent to embody that life throughout the places its people already inhabit. Where do you see the gathered source and the sent direction in these passages? Where are you already part of that movement?

Try it together

Scenario 1. A close friend, roommate, or family member says, "When you are stressed, your words become sharp and I feel like I have to stay out of your way." The first response is, "I have a lot going on. You know I do not mean it."

Scenario 2. Several people share responsibility for caring for someone they love. One person has quietly carried most of the work and is becoming resentful. The others feel criticized and begin defending what they have done instead of listening.

Stay with the cases.

What is each person trying to protect? What complaint needs to be heard? Where might defensiveness, scorekeeping, or avoidance be the old clothing? What would compassion, humility, patience, truth, forgiveness, and love require next?

Keep your Bible open.

Look back at Colossians 3:12–17 and Deuteronomy 6:4–9. What has Christ already given before anyone responds? Which gathered practices could prepare someone for these conversations? What word, habit, or reaction could carry that formed life into the situation?

Now think of one relationship. What does that person regularly experience from you? What needs to be taken off, and what could you put on? If serious harm or danger is involved, do not treat it as ordinary irritation. Seeking help, telling the truth, setting boundaries, or reporting danger may be faithful. Forgiveness does not require unsafe access.

This week: At one ordinary transition each day—a doorway, commute, or phone call—pray, "Jesus, let your word dwell in me and your peace govern my response." Then take one concrete step with an actual person.

For further study, read Deuteronomy 5:6; 6:20–25; Mark 12:28–34; Ephesians 4:25–5:2; and Colossians 3:1–17; 4:2–6.

Remember the Center

Disciples

Disciples are: united with Jesus; being formed by the Spirit to be like Jesus; joining Jesus in his kingdom work.

Gathered and Sent

The church gathers to be formed and is sent to embody that life throughout the places its people already inhabit.

Closing Prayer

Father, you have raised us with Christ and named us chosen, holy, and beloved. Let Christ's word dwell among us and his peace govern us. Clothe us with compassion, patience, forgiveness, and love. Send us to wear that life with the people closest to us. Give us courage for the next faithful step. Amen.