

Metro Women's Bible Studies
Ephesians 4:17-32

Lesson 10

Warren Wiersbe titled this section of Ephesians, "Take Off The Grave Clothes!". As you study this lesson, you will discover Paul's exhortation to *put off* certain behaviors and to *put on* others. How do you see the things we are told to *put off*? Do you see them as desirable garments? Or do you see them as grave clothes, rags that no longer fit the new you?

DAY ONE: Read Ephesians 4:17-32

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet and another Bible translation or paraphrase.

a. Ephesians 4:17-32 has been divided into 2 sections. List below the subject(s) covered in each section.

Verses 17-24

Verses 25-32

OPTIONAL: From the list below record the key words and their symbols on your chart.

Term of conclusion: *therefore*

Contrast: *but*

OPTIONAL: Using the symbols you have chosen, mark each of the key words every time they are used in Ephesians 3:14-21. Remember, as you mark the words: *God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit*, to mark any personal pronouns that refer to Them.

2. This portion of Scripture lists specific behaviors we are to *put off* and *put on*. The **negative** behaviors are indicated by words or phrases such as ***no longer, put off, put away, and let no.*** The **positive** behaviors are indicated by words or phrases such as ***put on, be, and rather.*** Read verses 17-31, mark the negative and positive behaviors by underlining, circling, or highlighting.

¹⁷This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.²⁰But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²²that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.²⁵Therefore, putting away lying, "***Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,***" for we are members of one another. ²⁶"***Be angry, and do not sin***": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷nor give place to the devil. ²⁸Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. ²⁹Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³²And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

a. List below the **behaviors** we are to **put off** and those we are to **put on** from the passage above.

Put Off

Put On

b. What stood out to you the most after looking at the contrast of the old man and the new man?

Paul has spent three chapters spelling out in detail all God has done for us freely by His grace. Only after we really understand all God has done for us, will we understand how much we will naturally want to serve and obey Him out of gratitude and have a walk worthy of the calling with which we were called!

I want to remind you sisters that we don't walk worthy so *that* God will love us, we walk worthy *because* He does!

DAY TWO: Read Ephesians 4:17-21

We cannot ignore the word **therefore** in verse 17, for Paul uses it serves as a sign post to capture our attention. **Therefore** makes the connection, not only with the **glorious** spiritual privileges laid out in Ephesians 1 through 3, but also with the high call of a unified, mature body as described in Ephesians 4:1-6. Because of this high calling, we should walk (conduct our lives) in a different manner than the world around us.

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-18. Although most of those Paul was writing to in Ephesus were Gentiles, he refers to their old manner of life in Ephesians 4:17 through 19. How did Paul describe *the rest of the Gentiles*?

a. What did Paul say in Titus 3:3 about his life before Christ?

2. Verse 17 says, *the Gentiles walked in the futility of their mind*. Look up the word *futility* in your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Futility-

a. In Acts 14:15 Paul uses the word *useless*, rather than *futile*. Both are forms of the same Greek word. What does Paul exhort these men to do in this passage?

b. What does Psalm 94:11 say about *the thoughts of man*?

c. In verse 17, the Gentile's (unbelievers) walk is characterized by the **futility** of their mind. Their thinking is futile because their understanding is darkened, and their understanding is darkened because they are alienated from God! This is not to say that man, in his rebellion against God, is not capable of intellectual achievements. But it is to say that all achievements fall short of true wisdom, because *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* (Proverbs 9:10). As a believer, how have you experienced the ways and the thinking of man to be *futile*?

d. **J. Vernon McGee** comments about **the futility of their mind** from verse 17, "*it speaks of the empty illusion of the unbeliever that there is satisfaction in sin.*" I know that if it were not for the GRACE of God, I would be living in that same illusion! Sisters, how many people are living this way? This so saddens my heart! I feel so sorry for the young people of today who have been taken in by the promoters of immorality as a life style! Doesn't this prompt you to pray, especially for the youth of our Nation, and the youth in our Church? Would you join me this week in praying for the young people in our church and our communities? Please pray for the ministry of the 30's and younger group (**OPEN**) that will start on Sunday night March 29th.

3. Ephesians 4:18 says that the *understanding* of the unbeliever is *darkened*. Look up some other translations of this verse. How did looking at a different translation give you better understanding and insight to this verse?

a. Look up the word *darkened* from your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Darkened-

b. What are some synonyms for the word *darkened*? *The understanding of the unbeliever is:*

4. In verse 18, what two reasons are given for their *alienation from God*?

a.

b.;

J. Vernon McGee explains that being darkened means that the lost man has lost his perception of moral values. That is exactly what is being promoted in our day!

5. Think about this definition of darkened sisters when you think of the world. When you go to work, when you go to school, when you talk to your neighbors, when you see young people hanging around the mall. The world has no ability on their own to understand spiritual truths, because their ability to understand has been **darkened**. As a result, they live immoral and self absorbed lives. So when we go out into darkness, among people with **darkened minds**, we are not to allow our flesh to pull us back to the way we used to live, but instead, let us _____? (fill in the blank)

6. Verse 18 says that because of their state of moral darkness, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, they were alienated from the life of God, and from

true life! Let's look up the word *ignorance* in your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Ignorance-

7. How do you see this idea of willful *ignorance* and *futility of mind*, from the Romans passage below?

Romans 1:20-21

8. What does the phrase, *the blindness of their heart* mean? Feel free to use a commentary if you like.

9. Read Ephesians 4:19. What is the emotional consequence of their *ignorance* and *blindness of heart*?

a. Describe what it means to be *past feeling* by looking it up in your Concordance.

Past feeling-

Picture the horrible state of a leper, who has lost the sensation of touch and pain in his extremities. Because the leper cannot feel, he can hurt himself in many ways producing great damage. This is what the unregenerate sinner does to themselves, and it is a horrible state; producing damage far greater than the physical damage inflicted by the leper. Paul is urging them to not go back to their spiritually "leprous" state!

b. What is the result of *being past feeling* lead to? See verse 19

10. Paul exhorts the believers in verse 19 to, *not give themselves over to lewdness, or to work all uncleanness with greediness*. Define *lewdness*, *uncleanness*, and *greediness* as they are used in these verses from a dictionary or your Concordance.

Lewdness

Uncleanness

Greediness-

a. Why does Paul go into so much detail warning us about the flesh?

b. We can summarize their immoral behavior by saying they were walking in darkness because they did not know the truth. What do these passages reveal about the alternative to living in darkness?

John 1:4-5 “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

John 8:12 “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

John 14:6, “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

DAY THREE: Read Ephesians 4:20-24

1. The contrasting word *but* changed everything in Ephesians 2:4, here again in Ephesians 4:20, God shows the power of His intervention in our lives. What does this verse say?

The inference from Paul’s statement in Ephesians 4:17, (**walk no longer**) was because some of them had drifted back into their old unregenerate ways. Paul was trying to correct their defective thinking and potentially destructive behavior, by reminding them how they had been delivered from the immoral sewer in which they had once lived.

a. What should they have *learned about their walk* according to the passages below?

Titus 2:11-12 “¹¹For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”

2 Corinthians 5:15 “¹⁵and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”

Galatians 5:16-25 “¹⁶I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴And those *who are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”

b. What are a few things you are *learning* in your relationship with Jesus during this season of your life?

2. List the key words stated in Ephesians 4:21 for those who have *learned Christ*?

3. Ephesians 4:21 reminds us *the truth is in Christ*. Once we know the truth, we must be willing to make some changes. According to verse 22, what is the first change we are to make?

a. **Put off** means to put away from, to depart, it is a marker of dissociation, implying a break from a former association. It was used literally of runners who participated in the Olympic games; who cast off their clothes and running nearly completely naked in the stadium. **Former** means prior, previous, of an earlier time. The **Old Man**, the **Old Self**, is the unregenerate person. He is not part righteous and part sinful, but **totally** sinful and without the slightest potential within himself for becoming righteous and pleasing God. What does Paul say about the *old man* from the passage below, and what are we to do with him?

Romans 6:6-7 ⁶knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷For he who has died has been freed from sin.”

b. What is the exhortation and benefits according to the passages below?

James 1:21 ²¹Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

Hebrews 12:1 ¹Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

c. From verse 22, how does Paul describe *the old man* who continues in sin?

4. Paul is saying that the whole character which represented the former self was not only corrupt but was continually growing more and more corrupt. Look up the word *corrupt* in your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Corrupt-

a. The old man is decaying day by day, like a decomposing corpse. Every trait of the old self's behavior is putrid, crumbling, or inflated like rotting waste. Paul's point is that this **corruption**

brings about the result of a **worse** state. The unsaved person is subject to a continuous process of corruption which grows worse as time goes on. Be careful beloved sisters! "**The person you used to be**" can ruin you, through desires or lusts that deceive. Lusts are deceitful because they promise joy but fail to provide it. Have you ever heard the saying, "kill sin, lest it be killing you?" How do you see this in the following passage?

Hebrews 11:24-25 ²⁴By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

5. Verse 22-23 says that we are either *growing corrupt with the lust of deceit* or we're being *renewed*. What should be *renewed* according to verse 23?

a. Write out verse 23 using a different translation.

b. Look up the word *renewed* from your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Renewed-

CHALLENGE: Why can't the *old man* be *renewed*?

This renewal points to a complete about-face in their thinking, a change from mental impurity to holiness. The Spirit of God influences the thought processes of believers so that they begin more and more to reason from God's viewpoint.

6. According to verse 23, how is the *mind* of the believer *renewed*? Look at the passages below and underline what you learn.

Romans 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed (metamorphoo) by the renewing (anakainosis) of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Colossians 3:10 ¹⁰"and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him."

The renewal is not that of the mind itself in its natural powers of memory, judgment and perception, but the spirit of the mind, which, under the controlling power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, directs its bent and energies Godward.

a. This *knowledge* referred to in Colossians 3:10 above, speaks of a knowledge gained by experience; a knowledge gained by applying the truths learned. How has your mind been *renewed* (readjusted, changed, turned around, and regenerated) as you have applied the *truths* of Christ?

b. Why would Satan want to attack the believer's new mind?

7. Ephesians 4:22 instructs us to *put off the old man*. What does verse 24 tell us to *put on*?

a. Look up **put on** in your Concordance and write out the English translation.

Put on-

Ray Stedman gives the following illustration: "When I get up in the morning I put on my clothes, intending them to be part of me all day, to go where I go and do what I do. They cover me and make me presentable to others. That is the purpose of clothes. In the same way, the apostle is saying to us (Romans 13:12-14), "**Put on** Jesus Christ when you get up in the morning. Make Him a part of your life that day. Intend that He go with you everywhere you go, and that He act through you in everything you do. Call upon His resources. Live your life IN CHRIST."

8. How does verse 24 describe the *new man*?

9. How is our **righteousness** established according to 2 Corinthians 5:21?

2 Corinthians 5:21 "21For He (Jesus) made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

a. How have we become holy according to Colossians 1:21-22?

Colossians 1:21-22 "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He (Jesus) has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight."

b. Have you tried to establish your own righteousness and holiness? How?

DAY FOUR: Read Ephesians 4:25-29

1. Ephesians 4:25-29 becomes very specific about the behavior of the old man. It begins with the word *therefore*. *Therefore*, (because) we are to change from the *old man* to the behaviors of the *new man*, there are some specific things that must be different. In the column below write out the things that are to be put off and next to it, the contrasting behavior; what is to be put on.

PUT OFF
ON

PUT

a. v. 25

a. v. 25

b. v. 26

b. v. 26

c. v. 28

c. v. 28

d. v. 29

d. v. 29

2. Which of these have you struggled with the most, and how have you overcome this sin?

3. What is the reason given as to why we are not to *lie* but to *speak truth*?

4. Why should the goal of *unity* encourage us to *speak truth* to one another?

5. What can we learn about the proper response to *anger* from:

Ephesians 4:26b

Romans 12:19-21

James 1:19

a. According to Ephesians 4:27, what can happen if we do not respond to anger as God would have us to?

6. What change does Ephesians 4:28 address?

a. What kind of *work* are we to do?

b. How do you determine if the *work* you do is *good* or not?

7. *Lying, anger, stealing...* you may feel like you aren't doing that bad as far as putting off the old behaviors. Maybe Ephesians 4:29 will hit a little closer to home. What does it say?

Ephesians 4:29

a. What are the two rules of speech according to this verse?

b. How should we apply this verse regarding our mouths in our everyday lives?

c. What do these passages reveal about the tongue?

James 1:26 “²⁶If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion *is* useless.”

James 3:5-10 “⁵Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! ⁶And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. ⁷For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.”

DAY FIVE: Read Ephesians 4:30-32

1. As we examine some of the attitudes and actions we are to *put off* and *put on*, we discover in verse 30 that God as well as others are affected. What did Paul warn against in this verse?

a. According to the following verses, what *grieves the Holy Spirit*?

Mark 3:5

Acts 7:51

Hebrews 3:10

b. Of course, all sin *grieves the Holy Spirit*. What are some synonyms for the word *grieve*?

c. What is your reaction when you think about the fact that you can *grieve the Holy Spirit*?

2. Name the six sins of Ephesians 4:31

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

3. How much of these sins are we to *put off*?

4. From verse 32, what three virtues are we to *put on* to replace the attitudes/behaviors of verse 31?

a.

b.

c.

5. Who is our example of these virtues?

a. How does *putting on* these virtues eliminate the sins of Ephesians 4:31?

DAY SIX: Review Ephesians 4:17-32

1. Since becoming a Christian, what old habits have you discarded?
 - a. What is the first change you remember?
2. How do you see the *new man* becoming more and more a part of your life?
3. What advice would you give to a Christian who is frustrated with the "wrappings" of the *old man*?
4. How have you been challenged to not only *put off* the old behaviors, but to *put on* the new ones?
5. Record on your Worksheets "**Truths about God, Truths about Jesus, Truths about the Holy Spirit, Truths about the Believer, and Instructions.**"

Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness; He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man deals graciously and lends; He will guide his affairs with discretion.
Psalm 112:4-5