

EPHESIANS

PUT ON

Thursday, September 24

Reading: Ephesians 4:17-24

Ephesians 4:22 *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Ephesians 4 began with a call to live worthy lives for the Lord (4:1). Now Paul explains that means believers are no longer to live like they did before they were saved ('Gentiles' means unbelievers here). He describes this as putting off the old self that is corrupted by sin. They had DARK MINDS (4:17-18a). The Greeks considered themselves enlightened. But they had refused to glorify God (Romans 1:21) and come to the light of the gospel (1 Corinthians 4:4) Thus they had separated themselves from the only Source of life and light.

They also had HARD HEARTS (18b-19). They had closed off their hearts to God. More than just being insensitive, a hard heart usually comes from rebellion against God. They gave themselves over to indulge in wicked desires (see Romans 1:18-32).

They also had CORRUPT SOULS (4:22). The longer a person rebels against God the more corrupt they become. The lusts of the flesh are deceitful in that they promise satisfaction but fail to give it. All these traits must be thrown away for a person to become like Christ.

Putting on Christ is described as a learning process. Believers have been 'schooled' to live differently (4:20-21; 23-24). Believers have "learned, heard, and been taught" Christ. They did not simply learn ABOUT Jesus. They learned HIM! Christ became the center of their lives. This starts with a change of mind (see Romans 12:1-2) which begins to transform them into the holy righteous person God created them to be.

LESSON ONE: "Put Off...Put On." Paul says believers are to "put off" the old sinful nature, and "put on" the new nature given by Christ. Elsewhere he says to "clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh" (see Romans 13:14). When we are saved, we begin to "change clothes." It is a deliberate, daily decision to not follow our sinful former lifestyle and to live for Christ. This is not a one-time event but a daily battle (Romans 7:14-25). Through the Holy Spirit's power working in our lives, we become a new creation in Christ Jesus (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). What parts of your old sinful life are the hardest for you to change? What is your battle plan to put off these habits by the power of the Spirit?

LESSON TWO: "The Way of Life You Learned." Becoming the Christian God has called us to be is not an easy task. It takes hard work! Sinful habits can be hard to break. Old unsaved friends try to pull you back to your old way of life. It is a learning, growing process.

- (1) Allow the Holy Spirit to control your life.
- (2) Be grounded in God's Word and prayer daily.
- (3) Develop strong Christian friendships where you can share your struggles and find encouragement.
- (4) Find a good church that preaches the Bible and is dedicated to reaching others with the gospel.