

Ephesians 4:20-24

Today's passage includes a very important command which applies to all of us as believers in Jesus Christ. The contrast is clear, unbelievers live in a corrupted, sinful manner but those who follow Jesus have been enabled by grace to walk in a manner worthy of their calling.

1. The distinction

- a. There is a marked difference between the "old self" and the "new self"
 - i. The old self correlates to the state of our hearts prior to salvation
 - 1. Chapter 1 deals with this idea explicitly and in that portion of the text we learn that the old self is characterized by sin and rebellion
 - 2. This is the condition of the "natural" man, or the man who has yet to be saved and transformed by grace
 - ii. The new self refers to the regenerated or "born again" individual
 - 1. This person has embraced Christ by faith and Jesus has transformed them from rebellious and wicked and given them the Spirit so that they can walk in the truth (see Jeremiah 31:33)

2. The command

- a. While it is objectively true that Christians are born again and, therefore, enjoy new life, Paul makes it clear that we must cooperate with the Spirit in sanctification by choosing to "put on" the new self
 - i. This little phrase "put on" denotes an active embrace and cooperation with the Spirit
 - ii. There is a way for believers to grieve the Lord and walk in a manner that is unworthy and unbecoming of their new nature
- b. Paul's point is that the Christian life should be one of active obedience by pursuing and employing the power that God has given us to obey Him!
- c. What are some practical ways we "put on" the Spirit?
 - i. We put on the new self by communing with God in prayer
 - ii. We put on the new self by glorifying Him in all of our actions
 - iii. We put on the new self by "renewing our minds" in the truth

3. The connection

- a. I want you to make note of the relationship between the earlier portion of our passage and our text for today
 - i. The final method we mentioned of putting on the new self is obviously on Paul's mind because he mentions it explicitly in this passage
- b. Paul states that the way to faithfully put on your "new self" is connected to the "renewing of our minds"
 - i. This harkens back to Romans 12 whereby we read that we are to be "transformed by the renewing of our minds"
 - ii. The idea is that God has given us truth so that we can understand and obey what He has revealed

- c. In other words, the key to walking in the Spirit and living in accordance with our new nature is not nebulous or intuitive, its simply obeying the truths that God reveals to us in the Word
 - i. In this sense, the Christian life is far less mysterious than some would like to believe
 - ii. Many seem to live as if the Spirit must constantly reveal to them new insights in nature in order for them to operate in accordance with their new life but that is simply untrue
 - iii. Instead, the way to walk in the newness of life that we have been granted is to study the truth and pray that God would help us comprehend how to live in light of what He has told us!