

“Putting on the New Man”

July 30, 2017

Colossians 3:9b-14

I. Introduction

It’s been a couple of weeks since we looked at Colossians so it seems appropriate to read the first part of Colossians 3 which leads into the Scripture for today. [Please turn to Colossians 3:1-14.](#) Writing to Christians, Paul was calling for radical surgery. Paul was saying that Christians are to put to death every part of their being which was against God and which prevents Christians from doing God’s will. In verses 5-9a, he gave two lists of sins that belong to the old life and have no place in the life of a Christian. These lists are not exhaustive, but they do include some of the most common and troubling sins that believers face.

The picture in [verses 9 & 10](#): of “**take off . . . put on**” is that of a person changing clothes---you can tell a lot about people by the way they dress. From baseball players to bus drivers, from postal carriers to policemen, people wear the uniform of their profession. Similarly, Christians must dress themselves spiritually in accordance with their new identity. They have died with Christ and have risen to new life in Him. [Romans 6:6](#) says, “**For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.**”

Salvation produces a two-sided obligation for believers. Christians must throw off the garment of the old, sinful lifestyle—the earthly nature—the old self—and they must put on the lifestyle of the new man. [Romans 8:13](#) says, “**For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.**” This surgery, this change of dress, cannot be done by ourselves. The Christian life is not a “*do-it-yourself, lift-yourself-up-by-your-own-bootstraps*” kind of religion. It is a religion of the heart in which all that we are is yielded to the transforming, healing power of Christ. This change began the moment of salvation; [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) says, “**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**”

This is why Paul wrote in [Colossians 3:9-10](#), “**Since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self.**” The old self is gone; it’s been replaced by the new self—*for you King James version people: that’s the old man and the new man.* The Christian life is a continuing transformation as one becomes more Christ-like every day, this is why [Romans 12:2](#) says, “**Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**” In today’s Scripture, verses 9-14, Paul began with the method of transformation, i.e. how to mature as a Christian and then he gave the characteristics of this new man.

II. The Method of Transformation

“**Putting on the new self**” brings the believer a new life—an eternal life, but not instant maturity. New Christians are baby Christians. The old nature will continually dangle the garments of the old self in front of the new man and tempt him to put them back on. The battle against the flesh will go on throughout this life. With this in mind, Paul wrote in [2 Corinthians 4:16](#), “**Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.**” There is hope and there is victory, we are being renewed, changed, transformed daily.

In [Colossians](#) we read, “**Which is being renewed in knowledge.**” This is how the renewal comes about, not through a person’s own strength but through knowledge and the source of knowledge is the Bible—turn to [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#). In [1 Peter 2:2](#) Peter wrote, “**Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.**” God’s Word is the knowledge which will grow or transform newborn Christians to mature Christians.

The goal of the renewing through knowledge is to conform or transform the believer into the image of the One who created Him—[Romans 8:29](#) says, “**For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.**”

God’s purpose for His children, for Christians, is that they be like Jesus Christ in His spiritual qualities.

During life on earth, through the power of the Holy Spirit and the nurturing of His Word, the new self will continue to mature towards Christ-likeness.

Paul wrote that this new self eliminates or gets rid of all the old sinful divisions that separate people from one another. Such human distinctions belong to the “*old nature*” and not the “*new self*.” Human distinctions and differences should be no barrier to righteous living in the church. In Christ, there are no racial barriers—“**no Greek or Jew.**” There is no recognition of former religious differences—“**circumcised or uncircumcised.**” There are no cultural differences in Christ—“**barbarian, Scythian.**” And there is no economic or political differences—“**slave or free.**” All these human distinctions belong to the “*old nature*” and not the “*new self*.” In **Galatians 3:28** Paul wrote, “**There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**”

Paul closed this section in Colossians by writing that, contrary to the culture of the day, there is no place for man-made barriers in the church since “**Christ is all and is in all.**” Because Christ indwells all believers, all are equal. He breaks down all racial, cultural, and social barriers and makes believers into one new man-- **Ephesians 2:14** says, “**For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.**”

III. Characteristics of the New Man

After telling Christians to “**put on the new self**” and how that is to be done, Paul made a list of the characteristics of the new man. But first, Paul reminded his readers what God has done for them.

A. What God has done for Christians. First, God chose them. The miracle of divine election—God’s choosing—did not depend on anything that a person was or did. **Ephesians 1:4** says that God chose us in Christ “**before the foundation of the world.**” If God saved a sinner on the basis of merit or works, nobody would be saved—as **Romans 3:23** says, “**All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Salvation is all done through God’s grace that it might bring glory to God. **Second,** He made them holy. Holy means *set apart* or *separate*. Because they have trusted in Christ, Christians have

been set apart from the world unto the Lord. Christians are different from the world. **Third**, God “**dearly loved**” them. Christians are objects of God’s special love—it was because of that love that Jesus died on the cross so that those who believe on Him would have eternal life.

Chosen, holy, dearly loved are all used of Israel in the Old Testament. A change has taken place in the economy of God. What was once true of the elect nation of Israel is now true of all who come to faith in Christ. As **Romans chapters 9 thru 11** say, Israel has been temporarily set aside and Gentiles have been grafted in. **2 Timothy** summarizes all this—**turn to 2 Timothy 1:8-9**.

B. Christian Responsibilities—Clothe yourself with:

1. Compassion Because of being chosen, being made holy and dearly loved by God, there are some responsibilities for the Christian as he puts on the “**new self**.” Paul listed 8 characteristics or virtues beginning with compassion.

Jesus had compassion—in **Matthew 9:36** we read, “**When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.**” Compassion is the deep response one has when he does something about his feeling of pity. Believers must not be indifferent to suffering, but should be concerned and involved in meeting people’s needs.

2. Kindness The 2nd characteristic of a Christian should be kindness. Kindness is closely related to compassion. The kind person is as concerned about his neighbor’s good as he is about his own. God is kind, even to ungrateful and evil people—in **Luke 6:35** Jesus said, “**But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.**” In fact, God’s kindness was instrumental for our salvation—**Romans 2:4** says, “**God’s kindness leads you towards repentance.**”

3. Humility The 3rd characteristic, humility, was not admired in the ancient world; instead, they admired pride and domination. It took Christianity to elevate humility to a virtue. Humility is not

thinking poorly of oneself, it is having the proper estimate of oneself in the will of God. The person with humbleness of mind thinks of others first before himself. Humility allows one to serve others without caring whether he/she is noticed or not.

4. 4th is Gentleness. Gentleness or meekness is not synonymous with weakness; rather, it is power under control. It is the willingness to suffer injury instead of inflicting it. The gentle person does not have to fly off the handle because he has everything under control.

5. Then there's Patience. A patient person doesn't quickly get angry at others. They are long-suffering. When a person is patient, he can put up with provoking people or circumstances without retaliating. There are times to get angry, but it is wrong to get angry quickly at the wrong things and for the wrong reasons. Were it not for God's patience, no one would ever be saved—[2 Peter 3:15](#): **“Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation;”** [2 Peter 3:9](#) says, **“He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”**

6. Bear with each other The 6th characteristic, *bear with each other*, means “to endure, to hold out in spite of persecution, threats, injury, indifference, or complaints and not retaliate.” It characterized Paul, who told the Corinthians in [1 Corinthians 4:12](#), **“When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it.”**

7. Forgiving one another It isn't enough that the Christian must endure grief and irritation, and refuse to retaliate; he must also forgive the troublemaker. This is the 7th virtue: forgiving one another. If one doesn't forgive, then feelings of anger will develop in the heart; and these can lead to greater sins. The church is to be a gracious, mutually forgiving fellowship. Paul points to Jesus as the model of forgiveness. Because Jesus has forgiven us, so also must we forgive others.

8. Love As Paul wrote in Colossians as well as other places, the 8th characteristic, love—agape love, is the most important characteristic. It acts like a belt or girdle that ties all the other virtues together. Love is the glue that produces unity in the church. Believers will never have these virtues

unless they love one another. To try to practice these virtues without love is legalism. They must flow from love, which in turn is a fruit of the Spirit-filled life. Nothing is acceptable to God if it isn't motivated by love—[turn to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3](#).

IV. Conclusion

When one becomes a Christian, there is more to it than just believing that Jesus died on the cross for a person's sins. As [Romans 10:9](#) says, there is also the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The old nature must be discarded; the new nature must be put on. [Turn to Galatians 5:22-26](#). The old nature isn't just converted; it is replaced by the new self. The picture is that of a person changing clothes. The resurrection of Jesus is an example of that. When He arose from the dead, Jesus left the grave clothes behind ([John 20:1-10](#)). He entered into a glorious resurrection life and had no need for the grave clothes. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, in [John 11:44](#) Jesus instructed the people to **“Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”** The grave clothes represent the old life with its sinful deeds. Now that we have new life in Christ, we must walk “in newness of life” by putting off the old deeds and desires.

God *formed* us in His image, but we were *deformed* from God's image by sin. But, through the Lord Jesus Christ, we can be transformed into God's image again. As [Ephesians 4:23](#) says, we are **“to be made new in the attitude of your minds and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”** As we grow in the knowledge of the Word of God, we will be transformed by the Spirit of God. As we grow in our Christian walk, the Christian characteristics should become more and more obvious. So the question is: Are compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience seen in your life? Do you bear with others, and do you forgive others as Christ forgave you? Is your life, are your thoughts guided by agape love—sacrificial love? That is, like Jesus Christ has demonstrated, are you ready to give sacrificially for others just as Jesus did for

you? You may be able to fool some people, but what about those closest to you, would they agree with your assessment of the virtues in your life? Who wins in the battle of wills—the new man or the old? In closing **turn to James 4:7-10**. Do you want to put off the old sinful nature and put on the new man; then **“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. ”**