

Putting Off and Putting On

Ephesians 4:22-29

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Intro

Paul is telling us about how to walk as a Christian. We used to walk in the world – worldly--, but God has made us a new creation when we became believers. God wants us to learn how to walk worthy of that calling.

Here in these verses Paul is telling us that we need to lay aside the stuff of the old way of life.

Here is our basic problem: though God has saved us and put a new spirit within us, we still carry the same flesh we had with us we had when we got saved. We need learn to put off the ways of the flesh, and we need to put on the ways of Christ.

These are the things that Paul says we need to put off and put on.

I. Put on Truth

- Paul begins with truth, but what we need to understand is that it is more than just a way to speak; it's a way to live.
- If a person can live a lie, then what we need to understand is the importance of living the truth.

A. Lay aside falsehood

- The Lord hates falsehood because it is so destructive.
- In fact, He calls Satan the father of lies. Those who lie, then, are imitating the father of lies.

John 8:44-45, “When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!” NIV

- People lie because they believe that it will help them get ahead, that it will make life easier for them. But it doesn't, it makes life much more difficult.
- And not only that, but God is much more pleased with those who speak the truth.

Proverbs 12:22, Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are His delight.

Illus – When I was 18, I lied to try to get out of a traffic ticket. It didn't work. When I was 45...

- There are several ways to lie, there's the straight out lie, the white lie, the exaggeration...

Illus – Pretending you know something when you don't is also a lie. Vacuum advance module...

B. Speak the truth in love

- Vs 15 – Paul wrote that we should speak the truth, but that we should say it with love.
- I'm so glad that God adds love to truth when it comes to me because truth by itself without love can be extremely harsh.

Illus – If your wife asks, “Honey, does this dress look good on me?” Don't say – Pastor Rich said to tell the truth...

Better to say, “You do more for that dress than it does for you...”

- Paul says that the reason we are to speak the truth is because we are members of one another. In other words, we hurt each other when we lie.

Illus – My mom would sometimes line everyone up and ask the guilty person to confess, but if he wouldn’t...

II. Put off Sinful Anger

- Paul qualifies this because there is the possibility of having righteous anger. The Lord had righteous anger when he cleared the temple of cheating moneychangers.
- But we must put off anger that is sinful.

A. Anger has many forms

- *For example -- pouting, resentment, holding onto grudges, withholding relationship, yelling, throwing things, etc.*
- It may seem that anger is almost always justified because it is triggered by someone else’s actions.
- But the problem is that the anger of man does not bring about the righteousness of God.

James 1:19-20, This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

- The problem is that the cause of anger is often found in the weakness of our humanity. for example:

- **Fear** – If we’re afraid of something, it’s common to be angry at it.

Illus – Water Moccasin in Arkansas, cockroaches in Africa.

- **Rejection** – If somebody rejects us, we can find ourselves angry at the person. (Our pride and our feelings are hurt.)
- **No power to change** – When we feel stuck and can’t change the situation we often turn to anger rather than prayer.

Proverbs 16:32, He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

B. Make relationships a priority

- *Paul says not to let the sun go down on your anger.* In other words, make sure you guard the relationship. It’s important and anger will only bring damage to it.

Illus – Do not let the sun go down on your anger. This is why I start my issues after sunset; that way I have a whole day to be angry :->)

- God says it’s sin to have anger in our hearts because it’s hurtful both to us and to others.
- But the theme of this chapter is how we are to edify, or build up, those around us, not tear them down.

Illus – some people say, “Look, this is just the way I am, Ok?” This is supposed to excuse certain behaviors. Actually, that’s who they were, and perhaps still are, but the question now is who will they become?

They are under the false assumption that who they are is somehow locked into some kind of genetic code and they have no choice but to live out the disposition given to them. This may be true of alligators, crocodiles, and hyenas, but there is something much higher at work in those who are in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 4:29, Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

- Jesus also taught His disciples the importance of being consistent in our lives.

Luke 12:1, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

Illus – A friend was asked to read scripture in church, but when he stood up, he first asked forgiveness from his son for how he spoke to him that morning in the car on the way to church.

III. Put on Honest Work

- The old ways of the world are to take what doesn’t belong to you, but Paul says to put that off.

A. Put away stealing

- Many people think of stealing in terms of an object, but there are many forms of stealing, especially in today’s modern technological world.
- Paul says that a Christian should not be this way.

Illus – Copying software, burning CDs, borrowing and not returning, cooking the books, lying on taxes, etc

- Stealing is essentially taking a short cut to get what we want, there is an urge inside of all of us to do this, *but it is completely self-centered and shows complete disregard for the other person.*
- When Zaccheus became a believer, he knew right away that the right thing to do is to make right what was wrong.

Luke 19:8-10, Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

B. Honor God with honest work

- A Christian should be known for honest dealings, but that also means he earns an honest wage.
- If you don’t give your boss an honest day’s work, you have stolen from him because he or she is paying you to do it.

Illus – In Russia, we were struck by how inattentive the employees were in the stores. It was like we were bothering them. Someone later explained, “They pretend to pay us, so we pretend to work.”

- But we should be known for excellence in all we do.

Proverbs 22:29, Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.

Illus – I remember a story Chuck Smith told about how drivers of rice trucks would sometimes put rocks in the bottom of the trucks, but Christians would be waived through because they were known for their honesty. That is the way it should be with us at our work.

Conclusion

We are to put off the world because it is perishing, and we are to put on the new man, made in the likeness of God because it is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.