

### The Christ Life: Put off the Old and Put On the New

#### Colossians 3:5-10

Colossians 3:5-10 - *“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.”*

#### Background Notes

Our background notes are about the composition of the church at Colossae. Look at verses 6-7 once again. Before their conversion to Christ, the Colossians used to live in such a way that would bring upon them the wrath of God.

What was the lifestyle that would bring on the wrath of God? The sins in verse 5: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. You mean to say that the Colossian believers were once involved in these things? Yes, they were - before their conversion! In their unsaved days, they were involved in all kinds of sexual sin. Their minds were filled with all kinds of ungodly ideas and desires. They were involved in idolatry, not only because of involvement in the pagan Greek and Roman religions, but also because of covetousness.

Why is covetousness called “*idolatry*” in verse 5? When anything takes the place of God in the Number One spot in our lives, that’s a form of idolatry. We can be involved in idolatry if *anything other than God* takes the top priority in our lives. When things like vehicles, or houses, or boats, or golf clubs (or skis!) begin to be more important to us than God, that’s a form of idolatry. When we covet places of power and influence - that can be idolatry. Even good things like hobbies or travel - if they become our main focus in life, they can definitely be a form of idolatry. Even a relationship with another person that starts out well, can lead to idolatry if that person begins to take priority over our relationship with God.

The Colossians had been involved in all of these sins, but now they were changed. They had become Christians, so they were no longer involved in these things. We too are expected to be like the Colossian believers. Our lives should be different.

## Doctrinal Point

### We are to “put off the old man” and “put on the new man.”

Check out Ephesians 4:20-24. The same concept is there: put off the old man and put on the new man. What is the “old man?” The old man is all that we were apart from Christ before we were saved. We were lost, we were dead in our sins and trespasses, and we were under the wrath of God (v6).

It's as if we were living below a dam, and the water was piling up on the other side of the dam, and it's only a matter time before the dam will break. Think of the dam as being the wrath of God. Before conversion, our sin was piling up against that dam – we were under the wrath of God. Without salvation, we were doomed. That's why John 3:36 says that “the wrath of God abides on the unbeliever.”

Of course all that changed when we became Christians! Now we are “born anew,” and the “new man” is all that we are in Christ: forgiven of our sins, having new life in Christ. We have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It's the new man's mind that is being renewed (v9). Romans 12:2 tells us not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind.

One more point about the “new man.” Verse 10 says, “*The new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.*” So God is conforming, or changing, the new man to the image of Jesus Christ! Romans 8:28-29 say, “*And we know that God works all things together for good to those who love Him, to those who are called according to His purpose.*” What is the ultimate purpose of God in our lives? Romans 8:29 gives us that: “*to be conformed to the image of Christ.*” So the new man is all that we are in Christ, and it's new man's mind that is being renewed, and it's the new man that is being conformed more and more to the image of Christ.

What about these other terms: “old nature” and “new nature”? They are not exactly synonymous with the “old man” and the “new man”. The new nature is the new divine nature that God has given to us. It's the new nature that characterizes the new man. 2 Peter 1:4 says that believers are partakers of a divine nature. That's the new life that we have in Christ. The Holy Spirit empowers this new life. So the new nature, then, is that which characterizes the new man, what we are in Christ.

The old nature is the sinful nature, and we still have the old nature. The Bible sometimes calls it the “flesh.” The old nature was what characterized the old man. Here's the point: we're going to have the old nature until we get our resurrected bodies. In the meantime, we are to ***put off the old man and put on the new man.***

“But,” you say, “I thought the old man was gone?” The old man is what we were before we became Christians, but because we still have the old nature, we can live like the old man if we let the old nature control us. The characteristics of the old nature are in verse 8: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language – they're part of the old nature. Even though the old man is gone, it still can characterize us if we let the old nature control us.

Here's an illustration. Suppose you have an old dilapidated car. Then you save enough money and you buy a new car - but you still keep the old car. In many ways, that illustrates what it means to become a Christian. When you become a Christian, you get something brand new: you're a new person in Christ. But the old nature is still there. Just like the cars, you enjoy life more if you drive your new car. You don't want to drive the old car around, so you leave it in the garage and drive around the new car. That's like leaving the old nature "in the garage" and being characterized by "driving in" the new nature. When you get in and drive the old nature around, even though you've got a new nature and you're a new person in this way, you're allowing yourself to be characterized by the old nature. So drive the new car! Be characterized by the new nature!

Putting on the new man is the same as being what we really are - we are new creatures in Christ. In terms of our last session, putting on the new man is another way of practicing the "RAM" method, particularly the "A" and the "M".

**Aspiration** would be like putting high-tech gas in the new car, and only driving the new car. **Mortification** would be leaving the old car in the garage. Don't drive it around! Don't feed the old nature on rotten TV shows or feeding it with bad literature. That would be like putting leaded, life-polluting gas in the old car. Don't even take the old car out for a little spin, because you're likely to end up in a bad accident! That's the idea of putting on the new and putting off the old.

Romans 8:4 and Galatians 5:16 talk about our responsibility to "walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh." That's the same concept as putting off the old man, putting on the new man. That's the method for living a victorious Christian life.

## Practical Application

### Let's take off the old man's dirty hand-me-down clothes.

Look again at verses 8 and 9, and think of taking off dirty old clothes and putting on new clean clothes: *"But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him."*

So let's take off the old man's hand-me-down shirts of anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and so forth. What's "malice," by the way? Malice is the attitude of wanting to harm another person or to harm their reputation, especially through malicious gossip. So the next time you're in a conversation with a person and someone who is a rival comes up in the conversation, take note how you talk about that person. In that situation, it would be easy to find we're verging on "malice."

What about the "filthy language" that's mentioned here? Filthy language is not only swearing. It's any kind of foul language. It's shady stories or dirty jokes. Ephesians 5:4 says we're to avoid foolish talking and "coarse jesting." That certainly would include ethnic jokes. Here's a good rule of thumb in that connection: if it's something you would be shocked to hear your mother say, don't say it!

Let's really work together to take off the old man's dirty hand-me-down clothes, and put on the new clean clothes of the new man.