

Series: Ephesians  
Title: Put Off & Put On  
Text: Ephesians 4: 17-24  
Date: June 1, 2014  
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Let's review the context of the whole letter.

Ephesians 2: 1: And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

With the mercies of God as our motive, Paul says,

Ephesians 4:1: I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3: Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We who believe have been richly blessed of God, made one in Christ. (Ephesians 4: 4-6) Now, from his throne in glory, Christ has put us under the sound of a faithful, gospel ministry.

Ephesians 4: 14: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro,...15: But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,...

**Illustration:** In our physical body, the thing that makes one member receive nourishment from another is that it is knit together with the other members. Severe a member from the body and it dies. It does not get the proper nutrients it needs. And the whole body suffers because of it.

So it is in the spiritual body. By compacting us together in the bond of faith and love, Christ makes each believer to minister to every other believer here in the body. So we desperately need each other because we need Christ most of all! This is our motive! This is accomplished by Christ working effectually in each member.

Ephesians 4: 16: according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, [by which Christ] maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

When he says we "edify the body in love" he saying as I receive grace from Christ, it is NOT ONLY to edify me, BUT I am to be used of Christ, to edify each of my brethren in love. What a great privilege! What a great responsibility! So we come to our text...

**Proposition:** Here he begins to tell us how we are to edify one another.

**Ephesians 4: 17: This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk,...**

Believer, do not conform to the ungodly world around us by walking like they walk. How do they walk?

**I. FIRST, THIS IS HOW WE ONCE WALKED AND WHY THEY STILL WALK THIS WAY—  
Ephesians 4: 17: in the vanity of their mind,...**

What is the vanity of the natural mind? The unregenerate sinner as his mind turned away from God while he seeks peace and security in things that are perishing: in material things, in worldly accomplishments, in the works of his own hand.

Jeremiah 2:13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Pray with the Psalmist

Psalm 39: 4: LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it *is*; *that* I may know how frail I *am*. 5: Behold, thou hast made my days *as* an handbreadth; and mine age *is* as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity. Selah. 6: Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted [in a great commotion, running about feverishly] in vain: he heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

Believer, God says this is how we walked “in times past”, but God says “Henceforth, walk not as other unbelievers walk, in the vanity of their mind.”

**II. SECONDLY, HERE IS WHY WE WALKED THAT WAY, WHY UNBELIEVERS STILL DO—  
Ephesians 4: 18: Having the understanding darkened,...**

The natural man is smart in natural things. But when it comes to God understanding and how God saves—the understanding is darkened.

Isaiah 44:20: He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

2 Co 4:4: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

See how he goes to the mind, to the understanding? This is where the outward walk begins—in the vain mind, in the darkened understanding—God puts in a new man and thus changes the outward walk.

Believer, God is the one who made you to differ. “God, God, God hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.” (

Ephesians 5: 7: Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8: For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

This is how we will edify one another in love.

**III. THIRDLY, HERE IS WHY WE WALKED THAT WAY AND WHY THEY STILL DO—  
Ephesians 4: 18:...being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:**

“Alienated” means “to be estranged from the life of God”, to be a non-participant in the life of God, to be shut out from the life of God.” The Spirit of Christ is Life.

Romans 8:9: But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

You who are born of God, now have spiritual life: you have grace, faith and holiness—by the life of God dwelling in you. But unregenerate, unconverted sinners are alienated from the life of God, separated from the fountain of Life “without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world.” They have no guide to direct them towards a holy life, utterly unacquainted with the joys of faith and holiness.

Nor do they want such a life or approve of such a life, “through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” It is by Adam—yes. But they want it to remain that way. Folks are always talking about man’s will—listen to scripture

2 Peter 3: 3: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4: And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

John 5:40: And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

John 3:19: And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20: For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

2 Thessalonians 2: 10:...they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

I want to say this in the right spirit, speaking the truth in love. I hope the Lord will use it to give someone life. Some of you sitting here, have your mind made up, you will not receive the truth. You’re here but you tune-out the gospel; you won’t look up the scriptures; you won’t listen to the messages again at home, won’t study the word of God; you are alienated from the life of God because you willingly alienate yourself—

Proverbs 17:16: Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?

A man that wants wisdom has to spend and be spent to get it. I’m not trying to be mean; I am being honest with you.

Brethren, you and I were exactly the same way. So seeing what God has done freely for you, God says, “henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk.”

**IV. FOURTHLY, HERE IS WHAT I PRAY IS NOT THE CASE WITH ANYONE HERE—  
Ephesians 4: 19: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.**

The sinner who is “past feeling” has reached the point of no return—“having their conscience seared with a hot iron;” (1 Tim 4: 2)

Please hear this: The longer a sinner goes in rebellion against God the less feeling you will have within. The little child’s heart is sinful but not nearly as hard as the grown man. The heart becomes more hardened the more sin and heartache we experience. Then men began to harden their hearts against God, willfully avoiding the truth. Eventually, God hardens it so that it is past feeling.

Romans 1: 21: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened...28: And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

When that happens, this happens—**Ephesians 4: 19:** [Who] **have given themselves over...**they given themselves over fully—to what?

**Unto lasciviousness:** sensuality—if it feels good do it; if it tastes good eat it; if it suits you then don't listen to any warnings against it—*Just do it!* We are bombarded with it in the movies, the internet, music

**To work all uncleanness:** homosexuality, fornication, adultery, every kind of lust imaginable. A person, a family, a nation does not get to this point overnight. But when they do they call it freedom

Illustration: It won't be long when songs on the radio will be one man singing love songs to another man. It's already on television and in the movies.

You become desensitized to sin till you become “past feeling.” Before, there was some sense of sin, of guilt. Now, they have lost all that. Now they commit sin with pleasure. They boast of it, openly declare it and defend it, glory in it, pass laws and call it their right. Because now have no fear of a future judgment. “Past feeling”

And they give themselves over **with greediness.** They crave more daring sinful lusts. Covetousness for money—“the LOVE of money is the root of all evil.” All of this was always in the heart. But over time, man becomes past feeling and gives himself completely over to it to do it with greediness.

**Ephesians 4: 20: BUT ye have not so learned Christ; 21: If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:**

**V. FIFTHLY, BUT GOD HAS TAUGHT US WHO BELIEVE TO WALK DIFFERENTLY—**

**A. Ephesians 4: 21: Ye have not so learned Christ.**

He did not say, “Ye have no so learned ABOUT Christ.” He said, “Ye have not so **learned Christ.**”

**Notice:** V21: Ye have not so learned Christ, If ye have heard Christ, If you have been taught by Christ, As the truth is in Jesus Christ.

It is not merely learning the doctrine of Christ, not merely learning Christ's precepts, not merely learning about Christ, but have we learned Christ?

When you learn someone you know their person, their character, their likes, their dislikes, their will, their heart, what they expect from you? Have we learned Christ so that when you think on sin or commit sin, we immediately think that is not what Christ would have me to do? Does Christ's look break your heart like it did the apostle Peter?

Have we **heard Christ** so as to discern his voice? not merely heard his gospel preached? But heard Christ in the heart by the Spirit working effectually within? I know my earthly father's voice. I know his voice in a crowd of voices. I've heard his voice since I was a baby. Have we heard Christ so as to discern his voice inwardly? Both in the gospel: knowing God chose us in Christ, that Christ redeemed us by his blood, that

we've born of his Spirit. And that still small voice saying, "this is the way, walk ye in it, when you turn to the left hand or to the right."

Have we been taught **by Christ**? Has Christ breathed into my heart so that I feel something of how shameful sin really is to Christ? So that I feel something of the weight Christ bore in taking my sin away? So that I am constrained by his love—by the great price he paid for me—so that I want to please him?

1 Corinthians 6: 19: What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20: For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

**The truth is in Christ.** To know the true God, learn Christ. To know true salvation, learn Christ. To know all gospel truth, learn Christ. To know the true path in this life, learn Christ

What I am saying is have we learned Christ in our heart? Do we have communion with him in the heart? Is his life our life?

What has Christ taught us? Not to walk henceforth as other Gentiles walk, but to put on Christ and walk as Christ walked—**Ephesians 4: 22: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;**

The change is not in changing the old man—our old flesh is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts—it will always be so. But everyday put off the old man. Put off his government by not giving in to his rule and dominion, to his lusts. By making no provision to support or feed him—suppress him.

And—Christ has taught us—**Ephesians 4: 23: And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.** All our problems begin in our thoughts, our mind. Our walk is determined greatly by what we fill our mind with. So fill the spirit of your mind with godly, good, edifying things.

Philippians 4: 8: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Ephesians 5: 19: Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Plus, Christ has taught us—**Ephesians 4: 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**

**Illustration of Spurgeon:** If a man wants to learn a trade, he has to do a great deal beside walking in and out of a workshop, and seeing how everybody else does certain things. He must learn the trade himself; it requires him to work at it. So it is with us: when we really learn Christ's character we will begin to work at having something of his likeness. To put on Christ and walk as Christ walked. We come far short, but Christ is the Mark toward whom we press. Faith without this, is dead faith. He who lies down in a bed of spices will smell of their sweetness, and he who lives with Christ will soon catch the savor of Christ.

**Let me end with this, be sure you hear this:** You've heard me, other faithful preachers declare that a man is not justified before God by our works. That is the truth. It is God that justifieth. It is Christ that died, and is risen again to make intercession for us. But brethren, our character and conduct are of utmost importance. Put off the old, put on the new, put on Christ. Now remember the context, this is for the unity and edification of Christ's body. It is to draw no attention to ourselves but to make Christ the focus for ourselves, as well as

our fellow believers. We need one another. Therefore, we have a responsibility, by the mercies of God, to edify one another.

Ephesians 4: 1: I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3: Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**Amen!**