

Renewed

Eph. 4:17-24

So, for three chapters Paul has been telling us who God says we are...

... now for the next three chapters Paul is showing us how we are to reflect into the world who we are.

Not only does God tell us who we are, God gives us the resources to “BE” who He says we are...

... Christianity gives us the resources to change.

That is what we are looking at today.

Paul is describing how real change occurs ...

You make a decision to “put off” the old self and you change from the inside out by “putting on” the new self.

- Verses 17-22 is Paul telling us about “putting off” the old self.
- Verse 23 Paul talks about changing from the inside out
- Verse 24 is about “putting on” the new self.

1. You make a decision to “put off” the old self and you change from the inside out by “putting on” the new self.

These phrases, “put off” and “put on” are quite interesting.

... in fact, throughout this passage Paul coins words and uses words in extremely unusual ways because he is trying to communicate some really amazing truths.

... and Paul makes full use of the Greek Language.

In our English language there are only three tenses: past, present future ... however the Greek language has:

Present, Aorist, Imperfect, Future, Perfect, Pluperfect,

These two phrases are in the AORIST tense ...

AORIST means that it happened in a moment in the past and its effect continues.

(A punctiliar action with present and future consequence.)

Paul says that they “put off” the old self when they left their former manner of life.

At some point they made a deliberate conscious decision to change.

... how did this happen?

v.17-19 tells us how

In verse 17 you’ll see that Paul says that must “no longer live as Gentiles.”

... that’s odd because the Ephesians are Gentiles ... what does Paul mean?

... “the way of the Gentiles” is an idiomatic phrase that means “unbeliever” ... “idolater” ... “pagan”

Paul is describing how they have come to realize that their old way of life was **“in the futility of their minds.”**

... Paul goes on to say they lived this way because **“they were darkened in their understanding.”**

Sinners live the way they live because they do not see and do not believe that what they are doing is wrong.

... You know the old adage, *“don’t ask a fish about water because it will say “what’s water?”*

This was the Ephesians, and us, before ...

Paul describes this past life as being a life of futility.

Futility means pointless, a waste ...

At some point in the past, these believers came to see that everything they were doing, the life they were living ... was meaningless

... according to Paul they realized their lives were meaningless because they were alienated (separated) from the life of God.

Let’s go back to the example of the fish that doesn’t know it is wet because it doesn’t know anything but being wet ... it’s always been in water.

... a lot of People think they have a meaningful life ...

... and until the Holy Spirit gives the ability to see they are separated from the life of God they will never think otherwise.

... if you are separated from the life of God, and don’t know it, then you are totally unaware of how meaningless your life is ...

... but when you began to realize that there is a God and that you are separated from His life that is when everything begins to change.

Seeing the life of God makes you realize everything that makes life meaningful (without the life of God) will be gone in the end.

You realize ...

- Love is taken away... the people that you love, the relationships you have all go away in the end... if there is no God

- All good deeds, all moral behavior ... all goes away in the end without God.
- “I want to make a difference” ... but if there is no God, it doesn’t matter

Before they became aware of the life of God:

- Their sinful hearts were hardened
- They were callous
- They were “given over” to sensuality
- Greedy for every kind of impurity

They saw nothing wrong with the life they were living ... they were in deep bondage and yet they thought they were totally free ...

... that is what the phrase “given over” means.

But when you begin to see that your life without God is a life without meaning and without freedom...

... that is when you are beginning to get ready to make this decisive change

... that is when you begin to understand that you need to make a change.

... when you see that life without God is a life without real hope, without control ... then you are getting ready to say “I don’t want this life any more.

- You want to be free...
- You want to matter ...
- You get tired of the futility of your life

... that is when you make the break

... this is when you make the decision to **“put off” the old self**

2. You make a decision to “put off” the old self and you change from the inside out by “putting on” the new self.

... and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, (Eph. 4:23)

What is on the inside of us is the fountain of our behavior.

We are going to get to verse 25-32 today but, in those verses,, Paul gives us a list of Christian behaviors.

... but that list doesn't make sense without going through verse 20-24 first.

When Paul is talking about “putting off” and “putting on” H\he is not talking about putting on and off behaviors ...

Paul is talking about putting off one “self” and putting on another.

... In other words what you ARE comes before what you DO.

... being a Christian means being something before doing something.

... a comprehensive inner change is the first step into a spiritual life.

Do you remember the story of Achan at the fall of Jericho? God had said for them to destroy everything and take nothing... but Achan disobeyed and took clothes, silver, and gold.

"Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did: ²¹ when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. (Jos. 7:20-21)

... the word “coveted” means to weighed something over in your mind and heart

Achan is saying, “these things captured my heart, and I couldn't help myself, I took them.”

Paul is saying the opposite of this ... if you let God capture you heart and mind it will change you from the inside out.

This right here is what most people do not understand about Christianity.

Christianity is not becoming more moral ...

... When you talk to people about Jesus they will ask, “do I have to do this or stop doing that to become a Christian.”

... this is the wrong question

Christianity does mean some behaviors stop and others begin... but you’ve got to go through verse 20-24 first.

The way you live changes because God captures your heart and mind and you begin to change from the inside out.

... Paul writes it this way “**be renewed in the spirit of your mind**”

This really impacts two things;

Being renewed in the spirit of your mind means that your **motives** change.

How do you get a child to behave right (punishment, fear (lose your job) and even pride—you don’t want to be like those awful people who lie ... that’s not who we are. In other words, it’s all about you.)

We are taught to be honest and good because it pays off.

Here is the problem, if that is your motivation one day you will justify doing the wrong thing because it pays off for you.

Some people are in church because it “pays off for them” other people are in church because they are captivated by God.

True Christians take the time to examine their motives ...

Being renewed in the spirit of your mind also means you embrace a **new epistemology**

Epistemology is a ten-dollar word that means ...

Epistemology is how you know about right and wrong.

Being renewed in the spirit of your mind means that your opinion, what suits you, even what you want doesn't inform your decision about right and wrong ...

... Everything shifts to the Word of God ... You let the Word of God dwell in you richly.

You no longer say, "I do this because I am this or because it is expected ...

... you now say this is the life I live because this is what pleases my Savior ... my Lord ... my King.

Consider:

If the distance between the earth and sun (92 million miles) was the thickness of a sheet of paper

*... then distance between here and the **nearest star would be 72 feet high,***

*... and the distance **to the edge of our galaxy would a stack of paper 310 miles high***

... Then we are just a speck of dust in the part of the universe we can see

... So, if Heb. 1:1 is right and there is a God who created all of this by the power of His Word and he holds it all together with just a thought ...

... then is this the kind of God you ask into your life to be your assistant?

- Who are you living your life for ...?
- What are you living your life for ...?
- Who calls the shots in your life ...?

Spend an hour and think about that ... this is how you change from the inside out.

3. You make a decision to “put off” the old self and you change from the inside out by “putting on” the new self.

... and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:24)

Paul doesn't say make yourself new or renew ...

... Paul says “BE renewed”

... this is not something you can do it is something you receive

Paul is saying that you put off the old self, you become so captivated by Christ that you change from the inside out ... and you PUT ON the new self.

... You put on the “new self” by learning some abstract principles ...

... it not learning abstract principles it is looking at Jesus and what He has done.

Paul says that “putting on” the new self ... and what is this “new self”

It is a self that is in the “likeness of God.”

This word “likeness” is telling.

Gen. 2 says that humanity is made in the “likeness” or “image” of God.

The “likeness” of God refers to the ability to be rational, relational, and righteous.

The Word of God dwelling richly in us impacts:

... how we **think**—we can reflect on who we are.

... how we **relate** to one another—we can reflect on what we do

... how **long for a world** where sin is gone and justice reigns—we can reflect on how we live.

To put on the new self means to look at Jesus Christ, love Jesus and say, “**that’s what I want to be, that’s my new ideal.**”

- Science and reason can tell you what is ... but only God can tell you what should be.

We have believed the truth, received the life, and now we walk this way.