

NEW CLOTHES FOR A NEW PERSON

Ephesians 4:17-24

“Clothes make man” We live in fashion-conscious age.

Wherever you go, fashion-conscious people make fashion statements by clothes we wear!

Advertising campaigns sell idea that if we wear right clothes, we'll be happy & successful!

Wear right clothes & friends will flock to us

–beautiful women–handsome men–hang all over us!

Dress for Success tells us what we wear determines our future

Fashion World promises **“Sartorial regeneration!” =>new birth through new clothes!**

“Clothes make a person!”

Ephesians turns that around:

new people ought to wear new clothes.

Being new person ought to change way we dress!

Paul isn't presenting legalistic dress code to tell us how to dress.

He's talking about how we live=>as new people we ought to look different!

1-3 God's incredible work: drawing us into family

He took people who're dead in sin; gave us new life; made us new creatures, members of God's family.

4-6 Implications of great work God's done in us.

1st implication: **Walk in unity 4:1-16**

Since God has made us one, we should walk as one

2nd impl.: **Stop walking like Gentiles 17-32**

God has changed our life.

We should *WALK different* than pagans!

We shouldn't live like everybody else.

"Stop living that way!" They've been walking that way

Instead, we should walk with renewed mind

Key idea: illustrated from **change of outfit.**

"CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES!"

We're to dress differently: New clothes for new person!

v. 22 "*put off your old self*"—**take off** old clothes – dressed like the *old* person

v. 24 "*put on the new self*"—**put on** a different outfit
– dress in new style—dress like new person

WHAT LIFE IS LIKE AMONG THE GENTILES

17-19 *This I say & testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸They're darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that's in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹They've become callous & have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*

When we lived in darkness among Gentiles, we lived like everybody else—that was *normal*

We read this as attack on pagans. That's not his point.

It's attempt to help us see what their lifestyle's about –what they live for—so we want to be different.

Some say Paul's description of pagans is too harsh.

It's not true that everybody without Christ lives such a terrible lifestyle!

It **is** true: life without God—leads to godless living.

Look at newspapers & tabloids.

Life without God=>self-centered life=>ungodliness!

What does that lifestyle look like? 9 traits:

Not checklist of prohibitions to work on—“*don’t be bad*”

“*Stop this! Stop that!*”—not like legalistic Judaizers

Changed lifestyle is created *by Holy Spirit* from ***inside!***

But, it ***DOES*** look different! => **9 traits of old life:**

- **futile thinking**

We’re deceived into thinking sin’s *fun*—until we’re trapped by consequences of sin!—*not fun any more*

People think we’re “*enlightened*” because we reject old-fashioned ideas about God, Bible; & believe

latest philosophies. In reality we’re **in the dark** =>

- **darkened understanding**

Satan blinds our minds; we *think* we’re wise!

Don’t understand consequences of having it *our* way

- **far away from God** (=> “*estranged*”)

- **ignorant** “*because of ignorance that is in them*”

(=> “*they know not what they do!*”)

- **hardened hearts**

=> “*porosis of the heart*” <=> *sclerosis of the liver*

—both deal with hardening

Term used of petrified wood—porous turns to stone

Our hearts were petrified—turned to stone re. God

- **insensitive** (=> “*they’ve become calloused*”)

NLT = “*They don’t care anymore about right & wrong*”

In physical life, God built pain into the body as way of warning us something is wrong.

It’s not good when we stop feeling pain. =>

It’s not good when people no longer feel pain of SIN!

When we stop *caring* about sin, can’t survive long!

- living for sensual enjoyment/pleasure

“they’ve given themselves over to sensuality”

- indulging in impurity

- continually wanting more => “greediness”

Desire for more is problem—NOT how much we have.

Modern society wants MORE of everything.

“There must be more to life than having everything!”

This description presents **essence of pagan lifestyle.**

Why does it surprise us when *pagans* act like pagans?!!

We keep expecting the world to look like us.

When that doesn't work we take 2nd best:

If they won't act like us, we'll just act like them!

We have “*theology of fitting in*”—theology of sameness

We want to be like everybody else.

If people won't rise to our level, *we go down to theirs*

Paul's message: we're to stand out—to be different

—to be light in midst of darkness

We don't like that idea!

That's precisely how we make an impact on world! =>

WHAT LIFE IS LIKE IN CHRIST 20-32

New clothes for a new person 20-24 *“That's not the way you learned Christ!—²¹ assuming that you have heard about him & were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²²to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life & is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³& to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴& to PUT ON the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness & holiness.”*

In Christ we ought to live different lifestyle.

What's new lifestyle supposed to look like? 4 traits:

- **[Live] in accordance with truth** *“you’ve heard about him & were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus”*
Jesus is source of our new lifestyle.
 We learn from Him to live consistent with truth!
 He leads us opposite direction from world.
- **[Live] putting off old lifestyle** (*“take off old person”*)
 Image of changing our clothes
 Take off old outfit; put on new clothes
 –put on outfit more appropriate for God’s children.
“Take off old lifestyle which is being corrupted by its deceiving desires.”
- **[Live] with different attitude**
“be renewed in the spirit of your minds”
 Our thoughts should be different! Not a *show on out-side!*
 Change of heart–new attitude–new mind set!
 Our outlook on life should be changed.
- **[Live] in righteousness & holiness**
 What are we to *put on*, when we take off old clothes?
 Not just negative–what we *DON’T* do!
 [removing old traits]
*“Put on new self (“new person”–new lifestyle) created by H.S. to be **like God**”*–in righteousness & holiness.
 –in righteousness–just relationship with people
 –in holiness–relationship with God (purity)

Warren Wiersbe captures this implication: “Fact we’ve been **raised from dead** (2:1-10) should motivate us to... **take off** the **grave** clothes

Barna points to tragedy of modern life: research shows: being Christian makes little difference in our lifestyle.

Vital Signs: 23% of *Christian* households hooked to cable television, subscribe to “porno” channels –same % as nation as a whole.

Gallup: “Never have so many claimed to be religious; never has it made so little difference!”

God has called us to be different!

–put on NEW clothes–different lifestyle!

People want to fit in—to be acceptable—from youngest child in schoolyard, to youth on high school campus, to worker in factory, or professional in office—we want to be part of the gang, be accepted by our peers.

God’s people ought to dress differently!

Get rid of old clothes—old lifestyle—put on new outfit!

Dress like Jesus—with righteousness of God.

J B Phillips: “Fling off the dirty clothes of the old way of living, which were rotted through and through... put on the clean fresh clothes of the new life which was made by God’s design for righteousness...”

The Message: “Take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life **renewed from the inside** & working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces His character in you!”