

Devotional Guide
Put On the New
Ephesians 4:20-32

Monday

Ephesians 4:20 – 22; Romans 13:12 – 14; Colossians 3:9 - 10

“Putting off the old” and “Putting on the new” is a recurring New Testament picture of Spiritual Rebirth and subsequent spiritual growth.

Think About It: What are some of the characteristics of the old self? In light of those characteristics, what makes it difficult to “put off the old?” Why isn’t it possible to just keep the old ways, and add the new ways on top of the old ways?

Prayer: Lord, help me to leave the old ways behind, and put on Christ.

Tuesday

Ephesians 4:20 – 21; Matthew 11:29

Ephesians 4:20 – 31 answer the question “How can we escape the corruption of the old mind and have a renewed mind and new life in Christ?” the first step in that process is that we must learn Christ – we must hear about Him, and learn about Him.

Think About It: The primary way that we hear about Jesus and learn about Him is through the Gospels. Each of the Gospels has a particular emphasis that we need to learn about Jesus. What do we learn about Jesus in Matthew (1:1, 17; 2:1-8; 21:1 - 11; 27:11; 12:22 - 37; 20:20 – 28)? In Mark (Mark 10:26, 45, 51)? In Luke (2:23 - 27; 4:18 - 27; 6:5; 7:1 – 10; 9:37 - 62; 10:1 - 24; 11:1 - 28.)? In John (1:1 – 10)?

What have I heard about Jesus? What have I learned about Him?

Prayer: Open my eyes, Lord; I would see Jesus.

Wednesday

Ephesians 4:21; Luke 24:13 – 32; 44 – 49; John 16:13

One could hear about Jesus, listen to His teaching, and witness His miracles, and still not understand what it all means. We must therefore not only hear about Jesus and learn about Him, we need to be taught the truth in Jesus. Being taught in Jesus means tying it all together – the creation story, the history of the Jews, the words of the prophets, the Praises of David and proverbs of Solomon, the life and teachings of Jesus – so that we know what it all means. Then we must receive and believe what we are taught (Ephesians 1:30) lest we perish (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

Think About It: What did truth about Himself did Jesus teach in Luke 24:13 – 32, 44 – 49? Who continues to teach the truth as it is in Jesus (John 16:13)? Do I understand the truth as it is in Jesus? Do I believe it? Am I walking in it?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, lead me into truth.

Thursday

Ephesians 4:22; Mark 1:15; Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25

Once we have heard about Jesus, learned about Him, and been taught the truth as it is in Him, the next step is repentance – putting off the old self. Ephesians 4:22 reiterates the truth that we cannot walk in darkness and futility as we used to walk. Being a Follower of Jesus and having a renewed mind requires repentance.

Think About It: Some teachers in recent decades have de-emphasized or even eliminated the necessity of repentance as a part of the process of salvation, claiming that it is a “work of the flesh” and since salvation is by grace through faith alone, adding repentance as a step in the process turns it into “works salvation”. How do the scripture references for today refute the idea that we should take repentance out of the process of salvation, and correct the notion that repentance is a “work”? Where does repentance come from?

Prayer: Praise God for the gift of repentance that leads to life.

Friday

Ephesians 4:20 - 24; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23

Ephesians 4:20 – 24 gives us a picture of what is involved in our salvation. We must hear about Jesus; we must learn about Him and come to understand He is the Son of God; then we must be taught in Him, and come to believe that He is our Savior; we must receive God’s gift of a repentant heart; and then we will be renewed in the spirit of our minds and become a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). The “new creation” or “renewed mind” resonates with Jesus picture of being born again (John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23). The “born again” experience might most accurately be said to encompass the whole process described in Ephesians 4:20 – 24.

Paul wrote of this transformation process “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:18). The New English Bible translates that verse, “From first to last this has been the work of God”.

Think About It: How was God at work in my life so that I heard about Jesus, learned about Him, was taught the truth as it is in Him (so that I came to understand what it meant that He is my Savior), repented, and believed in Him? How is God at work in my life right now?

Prayer: To God be the glory, great things He has done.

Saturday

Ephesians 4:24 - 32

Our salvation is not a “one shot” experience. God is not finished with us; having introduced us to Jesus and granted us the grace of repentance and a renewed spirit, He proceeds to invite us to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God, in true righteousness and holiness. Being born again is a miraculous transformation; but putting on the new self is a daily process, which has practical measurable results.

Think About It: Ephesians 4:24 – 32 presents a detailed contrast between the old self and the new self, summarized below:
v.25: (Zech. 8:16; Colossians 3:9); Truth replaces falsehood; truth is spoken; active, not merely a passive experience of truth.

v.26 - 27 (Psalm 4:4; James 1:19 – 20; Romans 12:19); Anger is without sin; disputes are resolved and not merely stifled; anger is controlled and channeled into constructive behavior.

v.28 (Proverbs 21:26; 1 Thessalonians 3:8); Stealing is replaced by productive work and giving; a positive action replaces the negative behavior.

v.29 (Colossians 3:8, 16, 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:11) Unwholesome, corrupting words are replaced by edifying speech which gives grace to the hearers and fits the need of the moment.

vv. 31 - 32 Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice are replaced by kindness, tender-heartedness, and forgiveness, motivated by God’s forgiveness of us.

Do others see the new self when they look at me? Where do I most need renewal?

Prayer: Lord, may others see the life of Jesus emerging in me.

Sunday

Ephesians 4:30; Isaiah 63:10; Hebrews 12:3 – 13

If we are truly born again, we must both lay aside the old and put on the new. This process is not a work of the flesh; it is the natural result of new creation by the Holy Spirit in our heart, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in our daily walk – Galatians 5:16.

Think About It: Refusal to lay aside the old and put on the new is evidence that that regeneration has not taken place. But sometimes even in the regenerate the old ways emerge in our struggle against sin because we fall short of grace (Hebrews 12:15). If we don't or won't put aside the negative behavior, we will grieve the Holy Spirit. We can then expect God’s discipline (Isaiah 63:10, Hebrews 12:3 – 13). Am I struggling against sin? Where do I especially need God’s grace in that struggle?

Prayer: Lord, your grace is sufficient; strengthen me for the struggle.