

# Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: November 15, 2009

## Living Consistent With A New Identity: Putting On The New Person

by Dan Trygg

"...in reference to your former manner of life, to put off the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,<sup>23</sup> and to renew yourselves in the spirit of your mind,<sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."  
Ephesians 4:22-25

Paul taught that *the basis of implementing the life of Christ in our experience is that we were put into Jesus, and joined with Him in His death, burial and resurrection* (Rom. 6:3-6; II Cor. 5:14; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:9-15). This is not just metaphorical language, it is a metaphysical reality. It *actually* happened. **The scripture always talks about this in a past tense.** We don't *have to die* with Christ as some future event or experience; we *did die* with Him.

**Because He took us into Himself in this way, we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.** Sin has *no legal claim upon us* any longer; ...neither does the Law, or the flesh, or any curse, covenant or generational tie. We have been set free from all of these by virtue of our death in and with Christ. *This must be a settled truth in our thoughts, if we are to experience our freedom.* Even though these old voices from our past may call out to us, we are no longer bound to obey them. We are legally free to serve our new Master, Christ, that we might bear fruit for God (Rom. 7:4-6). **If we do not understand this, however, and count on it as true, we will never fully benefit from Jesus' work in our experience in this life.**

It is like winning a door prize for being the one millionth customer in the grocery store you frequent. They take down your name, address and telephone number, and inform you that you *have won* a year's worth of groceries. They give you a credit card, which you can use to claim your groceries every time you shop. *All you have to do* is present the credit card and your I.D. each time you shop. If you do not *understand* what they are saying, or if you don't really *believe* it, you will never *count on* the legitimacy of that card. *You will continue to shop as you always have*, paying for your groceries out of your own pocket, ...and the gift card will do you no good in your practical experience. So, the first step is to *count on* what Jesus did as true, and *choose to "cash in"* what He has made available to us.

**The way we "cash in" on what Jesus did is to put off the old identity and its old ways, develop a new perspective on who you are and how to live, and put on a new identity and the new practices that go along with it.** Of course, it isn't just a simple one-time decision that we never have to face again. **The "put off" and "put on" are in-the-moment choices, ...decisions we can make for "now",** as we face a given situation. **By contrast, the "renew your mind" piece is an ongoing verbal form.** We need to *keep gaining* new ideas, more information, a wider perspective and a broader selection of options we could choose from, as far as how to approach situations in life. **If we only know what we know, we are doomed to keep doing what we have known to do up until now. We can't change if we don't recognize or understand what we could do differently.**

Three passages in Proverbs address this issue of getting new insights into life. Prov. 9:10 says, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom". We are accountable to a holy God. We can't go selfishly through life, or it will not turn out well for us in the end. This realization motivates us to pursue change. Prov. 4:7 declares, "the beginning of wisdom is: acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding." This indicates that **wisdom starts when we see the need for it, and begin to look for it.** Proverbs 2 talks about the hunt for wisdom. Vss. 1-4 describes the attitude, intensity and diligence of someone who is really hungry for wisdom. The Hebrew word for "**wisdom**" means **more than just information. It is about knowing what to do.** It is about being savvy and skillful about living. God exhorts us to renew our minds, to find other options, to discover how to do life differently. When we have a genuine heart to learn, and are actively looking, God will reveal new insight to us, for He is the ultimate Source for wisdom.

**This brings us to our study for today, "put on the new self". What does that mean?** The Greek verb is *enduō*. It is carried over into the English in the King James translation of Lk. 24:49, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye *be endued* with power from on high." **The word actually means to "put on" or "clothe yourself".** It occurs 27 times in the NT. 15 times it is used literally, i.e., for getting dressed in actual clothing. Four times it is used in word pictures of putting on figurative clothing or armor, e.g., the armor of light (Rom. 13:12), the armor of God (Eph. 6:11), the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:14; cf. Isa. 59:17; Job. 29:14), or the breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet of the hope of salvation (I Thess. 5:8). The remaining **eight occurrences are even more figurative or metaphorical. They use the commonly understood image of getting dressed to help us understand a spiritual truth.** Let's examine these passages:

"...*this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality*" (I Cor. 15:53). These two occurrences speak of how our mortal bodies will be changed when Christ returns. They will *put on*

the imperishable, immortal nature of Christ, the “Last Adam” (vss. 21-23,45). **Paul is following the same flow of thought as in the passages about the “new person”. Our hope of future transformation is based upon being joined to Jesus**, who incorporated us into Himself as the “Last Adam”. As in Adam all die, so also all who are “in Christ” shall be made alive. **Just as He was raised and glorified, so shall we be, because we will bear His image.**

**“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”** (Gal. 3:27). **The word picture is that when we were joined to Jesus, we put Him on like a suit of clothes.** In the context, Paul says we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (women, too). Why? Because you are clothed with Christ. **This is the basis of equality in the church. There is no distinction racially, economically, or even on the basis of gender, because we all are one in Christ. We wear Christ. In the Spirit, we should see Him when we look at one another.** Thus we are *all* full heirs, and share the same rights, privileges and status in the Kingdom of God.

**“And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high”** (Lk. 24:49). It is unfortunate that this is translated passively. It obscures an important aspect of what Jesus said. **The Greek word is a middle voice, which means that the subject is doing the action, but he or she is intensely involved in the action, or is limited or affected by the action in some way.** Every instance of *enduō* in the NT is in the middle voice, because to get dressed is an action that requires your involvement and affects you. It is no different here. Listen to the difference in the translation, “...stay in the city until you *clothe yourselves with* power from on high”. That implies that *they had to do something*. Clearly, they understood it that way, for they immediately cloistered themselves to seek God until the Spirit came upon them (Acts 2:12-14). **For our discussion, it is important to see that Jesus told the disciples to “put on” the power of the Holy Spirit.** We should expect the same.

**“The night is far gone; the day has come near. So then let us put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.”**<sup>13</sup> *Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.*<sup>14</sup> **But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires”** (Rom 13:12-14). This passage provides a good bridge for talking about the passages in Colossians and Ephesians at the same time (Col. 3:5-14; Eph. 4:22-24).

The verb, *enduō*, actually occurs twice, but the first occurrence is more along the lines of a normal metaphorical use, “*put on the armor of light*”. Note, too, that the “put off” versus the “put on” contrast is stated in vs. 12. The words here are exactly the same root words as in Eph. 4:22,24 and Col. 3:8,10,12. The word translated as “put off” literally means “put at a distance” (cf. Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:8). **Here, we are admonished to put away the “works” or “deeds” of darkness. This is a little more concrete, tangible and practical than “put off the old person”** (Eph. 4:22) would seem to be. Paul takes the same approach in Colossians, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ...<sup>8</sup> But now you must put them all at a distance: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have taken off the old self with its practices” (Col. 3:5,8,9). (The verb in verse 9 is actually derived from the same “dress/undress” word, here meaning to “strip off and remove” the old person and its evil practices. This is even more picturesque than simply “put the old person at a distance” and strongly reinforces the word picture of undressing and dressing. It is like stripping off some dirty clothes, stepping out of them, and putting them in a pile at a distance from you, so you can put on some fresh, clean clothes. Note that Paul also employed a different word picture, “put to death”, to add to the imagery of how to address the old ways and practices – Col. 3:5.) **In a similar way, when speaking in Colossians of “putting on”, Paul exhorts them to put on the attitudes and practices that would be consistent with their new identity, since they already have put on the new person** (3:10,12f.). This is different than Ephesians, where the apostle seems to encourage the believers to “*put on the new person*” in the moment, for the moment, at the moment we become aware that we have experientially drifted from walking in the new life. Back in Romans 13, Paul simply tells us to “*put on the Lord Jesus Christ*” (vs. 14).

**What does all this mean? (1.) We already have a new identity.** We *are* new creatures, with new, righteous natures. But, **(2.) we also have the dynamics of our old nature still with us.** **(3.) To live consistent with the new life of Christ in us, we must consciously put aside the old identity, mindset and behaviors.** Then, **(4.) we are to consciously put on our new identity, mindset and worldview.** The essence of this is that we welcome Christ to live in and through us (Gal 2:20). We *choose* to put on the Holy Spirit. We orient our hearts and minds to be led by Him, and seek to do His will. This word picture of changing clothes is helpful, because we can relate to it simply. **If we find ourselves in the old “garments”, we simply choose to reject that once again, put that way of thinking and operating away from ourselves, and clothe ourselves again with Christ by asking Him to lead and guide us** (Rom. 8:14), and by *choosing to behave* in ways that we know express His heart.