

# Put On The New Man – Part 2

Ephesians 4:24-32

24 . . . you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:24-32)

There is a very strange, very odd experience, one like no other, that takes place within our heart, our soul, our mind, our spirit when we receive the salvation of Christ and the presence of His Holy Spirit into our being. In only a moment, everything within us changes. We become a whole new and different person, not yet perfect, but with the actual and real possibility of becoming "perfect".

We pondered the meaning and the possibility of that "perfection" a few weeks back when we studied the words in verse 13,

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (Ephesians 4:13)

As I studied through those words at that time, I found that well-meaning theologians wanted to quickly explain that such "perfection" does not mean "sinless perfection", but rather is a "positional perfection" that we obtain through Christ. Unfortunately, those words, "positional perfection", are difficult for most of us to grasp. And God knows that. And so, He tells us here, and in 2 Peter 1, and in Philippians 2 and in other places in these scriptures that, in reality, it is more our response to our salvation that God has in mind, that of our "working out" that which Christ has "worked in" to our souls.

And that is what we are experiencing as we read and as we "work-out" these matters spoken about here. And while this perfection, this "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ", will not come quickly and easily, at least now we can have

confidence that in our “new man”, we actually do have the possibility of that grand experience ahead of us, even during our mortal lifetime.

Above all, we must be dedicated to working together with God in His designed plan and schedule. He has graciously completed the first part, the sufferings of Christ. His death and our receiving of His Spirit made all the changes that we would need to “begin again” in our “new birth”; and to begin all the many practical changes that must take place within us as we are “transformed” into His image, that “new man” with “true righteousness and holiness”, “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”.

And again, unfortunately, the “transformation” does not come easily. Just as a child is born with only the necessary essentials of life within him, and still needing much to be “formed” in him before he can become the fully developed and mature adult he is designed to be, so it is with you and me in our new condition of salvation. There is still much to be done. And that takes time and is, to a great extent, dependent upon our own personal surrender and our cooperation in God’s “transformation” process.

In Galatians 4, God speaks of the “life of ‘Christ’, the Son of God, being formed in us”. And that is the essence of the plan God has for us. His foremost desire is that the very nature of His beloved Son would be “formed” within your and my heart, soul, mind and spirit, that His nature would become our nature and that our mind and our mortal flesh would be conformed to all that the Lord Jesus was as He walked and dwelt among us.

And again, all of this is indeed a strange experience for us. In salvation, we are made new within, and we are able to sense and experience and know that we have been changed and saved. But then also, and strangely so, though our heart and spirit has been made “new”, God leaves that part of us that He calls our “flesh” much in the same corrupt condition it was in before we were saved, often still “connected to” and sometimes even “addicted to” some of the old habits and language and conduct and beliefs and philosophies that plagued our lives before we were saved.

And it is those things, those habits and that conduct, those beliefs and philosophies that God is asking, indeed even commanding, that we rid ourselves of, that we take an active part in “putting each of them off”. And we can, with His personal help and enabling power. And we must!

And just as God brings new life into our “spirit”, so also will He bring life into our “dead flesh!” And that is what these instructions are all about. In Romans 8, we read,  
10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from

the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.  
(Romans 8:10-11 (NASB))

“Life” in all its forms, both spiritual and mortal, is now not only possible for us; it is assured to us by the power and presence of God’s Spirit. And as these scriptures command, we need to get on about the part that is required of us. Romans 12 . . .

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

This is the continual call that is put within the hearts and souls of the men and women who have received Christ as Savior and Lord. We must immediately “get on about” the nature of “righteousness and holiness” that God has put into us. Verse 24 . . .

24 . . . you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:24)

And again, as we have been saying, God does not leave us to wonder and to make our own decisions as to what we are to do next. Here in the words of our scripture passage, He gives us some important beginning points to get us started.

As we studied last week, God begins here with a warning to us that we are to put away our “predisposition”, our “bent” towards lying. And we said that curiously, God ranks our telling of lies right up at the top of the most loathsome of sins that we can be involved in. And we gave an example of His disdain for liars from Revelation chapter 21 where He was dealing with eternal judgment! There He said

8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

And we noted in these words that God ranks lying right in with the very “worst of the worst” sins that we can involve ourselves in.

And then, here in verses 26 and 27, God moves our thoughts quickly on to the sin of “anger”. These verses, 26 and 27, can be considered separately, but can also be considered together, because God wants us to be reminded that the devil is always involved and is always the “father of lies”. Listen!

26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Unfortunately, I must admit to you that I am probably very qualified to speak on this matter of "fleshly anger", because anger has often been a controlling influence within my life, and still can be if I, even for a moment, turn my face away from Christ.

Considering these first words of verse 26, may I quickly say that I personally do not have a clear understanding of the concept of how I can be angry, but not sin! From these words, I know it is possible, but I don't know if I have ever truly experienced it. I have heard many people talk about "righteous anger", with some even claiming that position in one matter or another that they are involved in. I have heard preachers preach about it and theologians expound upon the conditions of "righteous anger", but still, such possibility eludes me. When I get angry, it seems always to be in a sinful manner or for sinful purposes.

So then, for me, I must still work with the very basics of this meaning and know that for myself, fleshly "anger does not work the will of the Lord". In James 1, we read

19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:19-20)

And may we always remember that anger, in all its many fleshly forms, is of a controlling nature and influence, and yes, comes straight from the devil himself! Sometimes anger is of the seething kind. At other times it bursts out in rage; each consuming and wrong and never working the will of God.

Again, unfortunately, I am well experienced at both, not as often with rage, but both have been a part of my life. Mostly, my anger has been of the "seething" kind, a continuous broiling beneath the surface, barely seen by the others around me, but continually present; so much so that the nature of that kind of anger became an ordinary part of my personality. And as people came to know me, they were probably not even aware that the "seething anger" was present, they only saw it as part of my personality.

Folks, that is an awful thought, that such corruption could become so much a part of me that people simply accepted it as "who Bill is". That is simply wrong and inexcusable, especially after I have become a "new" person in Christ.

And that is what God is saying to us here. He is saying to me, and to you, that we are now "new" and without excuse. All of the underlying causes of that seething anger have

been wiped away in our “new birth”, and now we need to quit giving in to those old ways, those old habits, those old philosophies, or whatever it might be that re-develops that kind of anger in us.

May we think for a moment using a very basic and simplistic metaphor? I can picture myself with my hand lying on a burner of a stove as it steadily begins to heat. In my ignorance, my mind does not fully comprehend that the pain I am feeling is coming from the heat of that burner. And so I, very foolishly, keep my hand on it. And even when I remove my hand, I often return my hand to that same burner, suffering over and over again. That is the kind of foolish ignorance that controls the mind of an unbeliever. They cannot perceive that their behavior, in my case, my seething anger, is the cause of the suffering.

Thankfully, after I received Christ as Savior and Lord, a light did begin to slowly come on in the recesses of my new spirit. But unfortunately, the process of my transformation was slow. And even though I was fully saved, I still continued for a lot of years with my seething anger mal-affecting my relationships with other Christians, despising my “very Christian” boss, having conflicts with co-workers, and even having very painful health difficulties.

But again, thankfully, somewhere along the line of my suffering, God’s Holy Spirit began to take control and give me a new beginning. And His “transformation” still continues today, that underlying “seething” form of anger slowly receding within me!

But may I remind us once more that much of this portion of the “regeneration” of our soul is “our part”, yes with the power of the Spirit of Christ in us to enable us to do “our part”, but still “our part” nonetheless. Note the words again that I have been quoting from Romans 12 . . .

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

You cannot mistake “our part” within these words, and they are truly a “command”. God does not say, “lean back, rest and I will put within you all of the things necessary to make you a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Me”! He instead, gives commands, pleas yes, but still commands. Romans 12 . . .

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable

service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

These are all commands, “expectations” of work that you and I need to get on about in our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

And so it is with my anger, with your anger, in whatever form it has within us, whether of the seething kind or of the raging kind.

One last thought . . . while anger may not be such a major sin in your life, let me assure you that you do have some of it, in some form or another. And God is saying to you “deal with it”.

As for me, anger is only one of many failings. But thanks be to God, I am confident that as I surrender my heart, soul and mind to Christ, He will be faithful to not only reveal my failings to me, but also give me the Holy Spirit power to “put each of them off”, so that I can get on about the “good things” He has saved me for. Praise be to God!

19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:19-20)

26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)