

Ephesians 4:17-27 by Wayne Barber

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Ephesians 4:17-19: A BRAND NEW WAY, PART 1

by Dr. Wayne Barber

We pick up at verse 17 now, and it is almost like another section. Paul says, "I don't want you going back and walking like you used to walk as a pagan, as a Gentile." He is talking to Gentiles. Let's read the text together in Ephesians 4:17-19:

"This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."

In verse 17 when he says, "I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord," that is a powerful statement. Paul wants to emphasize here that this is some serious stuff that he is about to tell us. So he says, "I say it to you with the Lord or in the Lord." In other words, "Pay close attention to what I am about to tell you." He wants them to see that Christianity is radically different from the way the world lives. These people had come out of the world. The temptation is always to go back to where we have come from. Paul says, "Oh no." He has given us a picture of what the Christian life is all about, being strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of God. Now he is saying, "Don't go back. Live differently. It is a radically different lifestyle that you have now as a believer."

Even though we have been delivered from the power of sin, we still have a problem we have to deal with. Look in 1 Peter 2:11. There is something we all have to deal with, and the Bible calls it the flesh. Of course, as long as we have human bodies, we have to deal with it. It always tends to pull us back to the place we came out of. Look in verse 11:

"Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul"

In those two words you find out where they are. "Fleshly"—they have to do with my body, and they are called "lusts". Those lusts want to pull me back to the world that I have come out of. Remember, spirituality is a pursuit, not an arrival. The moment I stop pursuing Him, guess what I am pursuing? I am letting the flesh dictate my life. There are fleshly lusts we have to deal with. So Paul is saying, "Don't go back and live like you used to live. Be careful. There is a tendency like a magnet which is pulling you back to live after the flesh."

Look over in James 1:13. Remember sin is missing the mark and when you miss the mark, that means you have not obeyed God. When you obey Him in the power of the Spirit, you always hit the mark. Righteousness is the result. When I don't obey Him and listen to the whims of my flesh, look out. In James 1:13 he said,

"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone."

The word "temptation" there is the word *peirazo*. Let me give you my definition of that.

I think all decisions, all trials that we go through are neutral, but in every one of them God has something He wants to teach us, reveal to us. That is what He is doing. He is testing me. He doesn't tempt me for evil. The old tempter comes along out of Matthew 4 and tempts us unto evil. Satan gets involved. Of course, the world is his playground and the world is his pulpit. Therefore, when I am in a very difficult time and I have to make a decision between my flesh and the Spirit, it is very obvious that I am in a time of *peirazo*. I am in a trial. The devil is pulling me one way, and God is pulling me the other way. It says in verse 14 of James 1,

"But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust."

The Apostle Paul is warning them: "Look out. Look out. You came out of the world." Ephesus was the most wicked place you could find on the face of this earth. These young Christians had to live in the midst of all of that wickedness. He is saying, "Listen, don't you dare go back to it. You have come out of it. Now be strengthened in the inner man by the power of God."

What is sin? Sin is missing the mark. Sin is when you obey the flesh. Sin will take you further than you ever wanted to stray, cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay, and keep you longer than you ever thought you would stay. Don't ever forget that. Paul is encouraging them to a life of holiness.

He is saying, "You had better watch out. You had better not go back and live as the Gentiles lived." He is going to show them first of all how not to walk. Then he is going to show them how to walk. Paul is speaking to Gentiles. Look in Ephesians 3:1:

"For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles."

That is a very significant term because it says in the Old Testament that Israel is not numbered among the nations. Israel had the nature of Adam in them, but they were not numbered among the Gentile nations.

The Gentile nations are very important to understand. As far as I can tell they were formed in Genesis 11. They tried to build the tower of Babel over there in Babylon. God remembered Babylon. Remember that in Revelation? When He did, He had to scatter them and change their languages. That is when the nations began to form with different languages and people scattered over the face of the earth.

In Ephesians 2:12, look at what it says about the Gentiles:

"remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

He is saying the Gentile world has no clue about God, Jesus or anything to do with the gospel. Paul's mission was to get the gospel to these people, these Gentiles who were living in such detestable ways.

Look in 3:8. Paul says,

"To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ."

The Ephesian believers he was writing to were part of the ones who had been shown the light, had understood and believed. In 2:13 he says,

"But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off [Gentiles] have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

So he is speaking about Gentiles, remembering Israel is not numbered among the nations. Yes, all men have the nature of Adam in them and they are born separated from God.

Think with me for a second, these represented generation after generation of people with no clue of the gospel, no clue about God, and no clue about Jesus Christ. Think how depraved they had become by the time Paul is given the commission to take the gospel to the Gentile world.

Let's see how Paul describes the way the Gentile nation, pagan people, lived at that time. They still live that way today. It says in verse 17,

"This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind."

The word "walk" there refers to the way they live. The word "futility" is the word that means emptiness, vanity. The term "mind" is the word that refers to the mind and its ability to understand, the intellect. They cannot understand spiritual truth. The way the pagan world thinks is totally foreign to God and to the world. The world out there does not have any ability to understand God.

Sometimes we get overwhelmed with all the immorality in our world. Friend, when sinners stop sinning, that is when you need to get overwhelmed. They don't know the difference. They do not know God. They don't have an ability to intellectually conceive of God. They don't understand.

Look back in Romans 8:20. Paul uses that word "futility" to describe the disappointing misery of the world of nature as a result of the curse. When Adam sinned it didn't just affect Adam. It affected the whole world. Romans 8:20 says,

"For the creation was subjected to futility [emptiness, vanity], not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it."

In other words, when Adam sinned, it didn't just bring a curse upon himself, it brought a curse upon all of nature. That is why they groan, waiting for the revelation of the sons of God, as the passage goes on to talk about.

In 2Peter 2:17-18 Peter uses that word "futility" to mean emptiness, no ability to understand. He is describing false teachers. He says in verse 17,

"These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error."

That word "vanity" there is the same word.

So we see it applied different ways. We see it applied to nature in their disappointing result of man's sin and we also see it applied to false teachers. It is an emptiness, an inability to understand God.

Let's go back to our text. The reason their minds are empty of any understanding of spiritual truth is because their minds are darkened. I think that is a very, very interesting thing that he is telling us here. Ephesians 4:18 says,

"being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart."

"**Darkened**" is in the perfect passive tense. When you have the perfect tense, something happened in the past that is bearing a present result. So they have been darkened. It is not so much that they did it themselves. Yes, something they did caused it, but they have been darkened. They can't understand. It refers to the fact that their ability to understand has been darkened, and they are in a state of darkness.

The word "understanding" is *dianoia*, which is a word that means intellect again. It is almost the same ability to understand. Think about this when you think of the world. When you go to school next week, when you go to work next week, you are walking out into this. The Gentile nations, the world, has no ability on their own to understand spiritual truths because their ability to understand has been **darkened**. As a result, they live totally unacceptable lives. So when we go out into darkness, among people with **darkened minds**, we are not to allow our flesh to pull us back to the way we used to live. They are living a detestable lifestyle. They are a generation after generation after generation of people who don't have a capacity to even understand God. There is one thing I want you to get in your mind. "**Being darkened**" has the idea that God darkened them, but remember this. They would not, so therefore, they could not. It is not a matter of God being a mean God, and just darkening them. No, He knows the hearts of all men and nations who have turned against Him. He knows that. It began with Adam and filtered down through the nations and because of that, they have been unwilling to bow to Him. Therefore, God has darkened their minds. In reality, it is their own unwillingness that has brought the darkness upon them.

Ephesians 4:18 continues and says,

"being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God [alienated from God], because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart."

That is what I wanted you to see. The ignorance is there for a reason. It is because of the hardness of their heart that the ignorance is there. A person who won't believe can't believe, and he is, therefore, rendered unable to understand the truths of God.

They live in a state of being alienated because they have hardened their heart. Look in John 3:19-20. Jesus said this when He came. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."

Look over in Romans 1:5 and you will find almost the exact same thing Paul says in Ephesians. Paul is writing to Gentiles:

"through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake."

Now look at Romans 1:15-18.

"Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.' For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."

In other words, you keep putting layer upon layer upon layer of other things over it until finally you don't even recognize it. That is what the world has been doing for generations.

Romans 1:19 goes on:

"because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them."

It is not as if they don't have a clue. They don't want it. Because they don't want it, they are alienated and their hearts are hardened.

Romans 1:20 says,

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

All of this is as a result of men not wanting God in their lives. Paul is saying: "Listen guys, they are still out there. Over the generations it has gotten worse and worse and worse. When you go out there, don't you go back and live like they live. Oh no. You live on a higher plain. God made Himself evident to them."

When I was trying to track all of this back, I was thinking, "Was there a time when all the nations just rejected God?" It has to go back to Adam. In Romans 5:12 it says in that one man sinned, sin entered the world. In Genesis 11 that sin just continued to go from generation to generation to generation. Can you imagine how sick the world is now that we are living in? It has such a pull on us. We all were once that way, but we have come out of it. We have to realize if we live like Paul tells us to live in chapter 3, as we go out into a world this way, they can see the truth in us. Perhaps through us they can begin to understand what the gospel is all about.

Well, the apostle says in 2 Corinthians 4:4 that

"the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

There is not a nation on this earth among Gentiles who has ever honored God. In the book of Revelation, the beast comes up out of the sea of nations and on his head are blasphemous names representing all the nations on earth. There has never been a nation that has honored God. "Oh, we live in a Christian nation." Are you kidding? We are in a post-Christian era. We are living in a nation today that doesn't have religious freedom. It has religious toleration. This has been going on for generation after generation. The next time you are so condemning of the lost people you hear on television, remember they are products of that kind of thing. They don't know any better. They have no other frame of reference. Only the Christian has the understanding of truth and can intellectually conceive of God and what God wants.

The lost world is a result of centuries of darkened thinking. Just thinking about it boggles my mind, centuries of it. The Gentile nations of the world, verse 19 says,

"having become **callous**".

That means hardened, insensitive. In other words, it is very difficult any more to even get anything across to them. That is the way the world is. This was back in Paul's day. Just imagine what it is like today. Therefore, all of their inclinations are depraved. The nations chose to dishonor God and seek pleasure rather than Him, and

"have given themselves over to **sensuality**."

Now that word "sensuality" is a word that you probably don't want to hear about because I really didn't enjoy studying it. It is the word that means licentiousness which is sexual license, sexual excess, absence of restraint, an insatiable desire for pleasure. That is what they wanted. It didn't say they were given over, they gave themselves over. They said, "God, we don't want you. We want to satisfy ourselves." That attitude has been propagated from generation to generation to generation. Associated with those attitudes of license to sin are three words: arrogance, insolence and brutality. Can you tell me a better picture of what is going on in our world today? It all started with Adam and filtered down through the nations. The nations rejected God even though they could see nature. They knew there was something causing it all to happen. They could have responded to the light that they had, but they rejected it. There has never been a Gentile nation to honor God. As a result, now their understanding is darkened. They have no clue.

By the way, when I say "they," please understand what I am saying. It used to be us. I hear some people give their testimony as if they want a medal for finding Christ. Not one of us found Him, friend; He found us. We were a product of that same system for generation upon generation upon generation. That ought to make your heart break for people who still live in that system and have no clue what we understand about the truths of our God.

If you will look in 1 John 5:20, a beautiful verse appears there. John is signing off and says,

"And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life"

Do you catch something in that phrase? Let's go back:

"We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding."

You mean to tell me that I didn't come up with that on my own? That is exactly right. He gave us the ability to understand and when the gospel came, it was all of Him. It is not any of us. Oh yes, we had to receive, but it was out of the faith and the grace He gave us even to do that.

When we go out living on that high plain and being filled to the fulness of God, they look at us and say to themselves, "I don't understand that. There is something different about those people." We begin to soften their hardness towards what the gospel is all about. Of course, the Holy Spirit uses that as a witness in this lost world.

I think if you study Ephesians you have to feel it. Paul is saying,

"I have just raised you up to the highest level of understanding that you could possibly get to. Now I am warning you. Don't you go back and live like you used to live. When you do, sin will take you further than you ever wanted to stray, keep you longer than you ever wanted to stay and cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay."

Imagine going back to live that way.

Ephesians 4:20-24: A BRAND NEW WAY OF LIFE, PART 2

by Dr. Wayne Barber

It is amazing to me as human beings, as believers, how quickly we forget what has caused us so much pain. How quickly we forget! Paul has spent three and a half chapters telling us who we are, what we have in Jesus Christ, and how we can appropriate it. He talks about how we can preserve the unity of the Spirit when all of us walk that way. Then he comes down to verse 17 of chapter 4 and takes a turn. He gives them a stern warning.

You see, Ephesus was a very pagan city. They had a big cathedral there for the goddess Artemis at the top of the hill. Paul knows these Ephesian believers have to work with these people. They live with these people. He says to them, "Listen, guys. Don't go back. Don't go back. Don't ever think there is anything waiting on you living the way you used to live."

So in verses 17-19, he tells them first of all how not to walk. He says in verse 17,

"This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind."

Remember he is writing to Gentiles, and he is telling these Gentiles not to live as Gentiles. What is the point in this? If you will look back in 1:13 you find that these Gentile believers were different than the other Gentiles that he is talking about here. It says,

"In Him [Jesus], you also, after listening to the message of the truth, of the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise."

You see they are different. Yes, they are Gentiles, but not in the sense of the context he is talking about Gentiles. He is talking about the pagan world. He says, "You used to be of them, but now you have believed. You don't live like them now. You live a different way."

There has never been a nation on this earth that has honored God. When you read the book of Revelation you will find the beast coming up out of the sea of nations and on his head were certain names, blasphemous names, representing all the nations of this world. Every nation has dishonored God. It started with Adam and then in Genesis 11, when God scattered the people and confused their languages, every nation from that point on, birthed out of pride, birthed out of rebellious hearts towards God, has gotten worse and worse and worse.

So when he mentions Gentiles here, he means the pagan nations of the world. He gives two descriptions of them. In verses 17 and 18 he says they are mentally darkened. In other words, they have no capacity to understand God. He says,

"This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded [or alienated] from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart."

God didn't decide one day, "I think I will just darken the Gentiles minds." We have learned from other Scriptures that they would not, so now they cannot. In other words, they didn't want God. When they knew the truth, they wouldn't acknowledge the truth, Romans tells us in Chapter 1. So therefore, the plague of nations is the sin in their hearts. They have rejected God and for that reason they

have a futility of mind and thinking, empty minds. They don't understand the morality of God. They don't understand the spiritual things of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14 tells us the natural man does not understand or comprehend the spiritual things about God. It has gotten worse and worse.

"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

We can see man in our world today. It is the same thing. The world is out there. You work in it every week. You live in it in a neighborhood. Everywhere we go people with empty minds cannot understand God. Man can put another man on the moon. Man can make a computer that will boggle the mind. Man can do all kinds of unreal things, but man can't even solve the basic needs of man. He doesn't even understand how to solve the moral needs of man.

Not only does he have a darkened mind, but he has a depraved morality. Verse 19 says:

"and they, having become callous."

The word "callous" there means painless. In other words, they don't experience pain any more. You know, the most dangerous time in the world is when we don't experience pain. You might think, "I don't want any pain." No. Pain serves us. It causes us fear and caution when we need it. A leper has lost all the feeling in his hands and can do much damage to himself. He can't feel anything anymore. When he is burned, he can burn himself tragically. He is hurting himself, but he doesn't feel it anymore. There is no pain.

That is what Paul says the world has become. They have such darkened minds they don't even recognize it, but out of their own greed, they continue to pursue the very thing that is hurting them and they don't even feel that pain. They are numb to it. Do you realize that all of us lived that way at one time? Look in Titus 3:3 for just a second. Paul says to Timothy:

"For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."

How quickly we forget what brought us so much pain. Paul is saying, "Listen, you are living in a pagan world."

Ephesians 4:19 goes on to say this pagan world has been given over to sensuality:

"have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."

In other words, they covet this kind of thing. It is a pleasure-oriented world, but not a thing in it is what you are looking for. Don't go back and live this way anymore. This is how you are not to live. Don't walk as the Gentiles walk.

Then he goes on to show them the positive side. He starts telling them how they ought to live. How then should we live if we are not to live like them? We have to live in a world where they are. How are we to live? How do we bring this down to practical terms so we can understand them?

First of all, Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:20-24 that living as a believer is much like putting on a brand new set of clothes. A set of clothes is what people see. Paul is saying something profound to us. He is saying, "Folks, you don't have to wear old clothes. As a matter of fact, you are not supposed to wear the old clothes that you used to wear." You see, wearing your clothes, putting on the garment, has to do with a way you live. It is a lifestyle. He is saying, "In Jesus Christ you have a brand new set of clothes and you are going to have to learn how to wear them."

LAY ASIDE PUT ON

He uses two phrases. One is in Eph 4:22 ([note](#)): "**lay aside**." That has to do with taking something off. Then he says in Eph 4:24: "**put on**." That word "put on" also has to do with clothes. One you take off, and one you put on. It is dressing and undressing. How are you supposed to live as a believer? You are supposed to be dressed the right way. Let me show you. First of all, let me show you in Acts 7:58 how that word "lay aside" has to do with taking something off.

In Acts 7:58 Luke writes...

"And when they had driven him out of the city [speaking of Stephen, the martyr], they *began* stoning *him*, and the witnesses **laid aside** their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul."

So you have a picture of somebody taking something off. That word is used several times. In Romans 13:12 ([note](#)) we get an even clearer picture of what Paul is saying in Ephesians. Paul uses the word and the phrase. We begin to realize that when you put off

this garment, this old man as we are going to see later, it has to do not so much with just the old man itself, but the way he used to live. It is a lifestyle. Romans 13:12 says,

"The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore **lay aside** the deeds of darkness and **put on** the armor of light."

Paul uses the word again in Colossians. It gives us a little clearer picture. Colossians 3:8 [\(note\)](#) says,

"But now you also, **put them all aside**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth."

Everything he mentions has to do with relationships. When we are rightly related to Christ, when we are letting Jesus be Jesus in our life, when we are being strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of God (Eph 3:16-[note](#)), we are putting on the garment of a brand new lifestyle. The first place it is going to show up is in relationships. **When you have divided relationships all you have is somebody wearing the wrong garment.** That is all there is to it. Somebody is not at peace with somebody else. We are to be at peace with all men, to wear the right garment.

Look in Hebrews 12:1:

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also **lay aside** every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

Take it off like a garment. Get it out of your life. Lay it aside.

There are two words that are used for that. One means away from, and the other means to place, to get it away from you. Put it away from you. Take it off. Peter uses it in 1 Peter 2:1:

"Therefore, **putting aside** all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander"

Peter said, "Get these garments off of you. You don't live that way anymore. Put that off. That is the old. Now you are to wear the new." So the word "laying aside" means to take off something like you take off a garment.

Let's look at the next word. Eph 4:24 says:

"and **put on** the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

You can immediately see the fabric of this new garment. It is **created in righteousness and holiness of the truth**. There is something contrasting to the old way I used to live and the new way I am supposed to live.

I want to show you how the word is simple. Acts 12:21 reads,

"And on an appointed day Herod, **having put on** his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them."

Paul takes that word and uses it in an analogy of how we are to live as if we are putting on a garment, for others to look at, for others to see. In Ephesians 4, it is a garment. In chapter 6 it is armor. It is the same thing.

When you put on Christ, He is your garment.

When you put on Christ,

He is your armor against anything the devil ever puts in your life.

In Ephesians 6:11 [\(note\)](#) he says,

"Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."

Ephesians 6:14 [\(note\)](#) says,

"Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness."

Now this is interesting. I am to **put on**. Every day I get up and **put on**. Every moment I move, **put on**.

But wait a minute. When did I get the garment?

Look in Colossians 3:9-11. We are going to find that we have already put it on. That is interesting. He says **put it on** in Ephesians while Colossians says, "**You have already put it on**" Colossians 3:9 says,

"Do not lie to one another, since **you laid aside** the old self with its *evil* practices, and **have put on** the new

self."

Here is what I want you to see. It's in the [aorist middle](#). Aorist means there has been a time, a certain time when you have put it on. But it also middle voice: you **chose** to do it. You understood what you were doing when you put on the new man.

I can hear some of you thinking, "Wait a minute. God chose us." It has nothing to do with that argument. That is not what Paul is saying. Paul is saying in essence

You understood what you were doing when you bowed before Jesus Christ. You may not have had much understanding then, but you understood that the old garment was a product of a sinful nature and that you, being in Adam, could not save yourself. You understood that, because repentance is taking a garment off and turning and putting a garment on.

We did that at the moment of your salvation. We put on the garment at the time of our salvation. We turned around (repented), sick of the old and put on the new.

"Now, I don't understand. If I have already put it on, why do I have to put it on?"

When we put it on at the moment of our salvation, we put it on inwardly. Now we have to wear it outwardly. Folks, it is the same thing Paul is saying in Philippians when he says **work out your salvation** (Php 2:12-[note](#)). In other words, get what is on the inside on the outside. Put it on. Again it is in the aorist which is [punctiliar](#): put it on, put it on, put it on. But it involves a conscious choice ([middle voice](#)) to put it on.

I want to show you the thread of that new garment. Paul does something in Ephesians 4:20. He does not link us to a creed or to a code. He links us to a person and shows us that the very thread of the garment we are to wear is the Lord Jesus Himself. It is putting on Christ. It is letting Jesus be Jesus in your life. Verse 20 says,

"But you did not learn Christ in this way."

You didn't learn a creed or a code. We are not tied to a set of rules. We are tied to a person. As we put Him on (cp Gal 3:27^{note}), then everything He has commanded us to do is strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man with an ability to do and to be beyond what we have ever been or we have ever done. It is Christ in us (**Ed**: The Spirit of Christ enabling us). That is all it is. It is the same thing as being filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18-[note](#)). It is the same thing as walking in the light (Eph 5:8-[note](#)). The Bible doesn't say seven different things. It says one thing several different times. We are to surrender (**Ed**: give up to the power or possession of another = the Spirit of Christ), and when we do, we are taking off something and putting on something. Not only will it be real to us on the inside, but it will be real to others on the outside.

Can I ask you a question? What garment do you have on? Have you put the old garment back on? You know, some people enjoy the rags of the old garment. It is kind of like Lazarus when he came out of the grave. They said,

"Unbind him, and let him go." (John 11:44)

In other words "Loose him and set him free. Take those grave clothes off of him." He can't walk. He can't witness. He can't worship. Everything about him is all bound up. But you know, some people like to take some of those rags and stick them in their pockets and say,

"You know, I kind of like some of that old stuff. I'd rather wear this garment than the garment of Christ in my life. I don't want to bow. I kind of enjoy my self-pity. I kind of enjoy my bitterness. I kind of enjoy my lust. I don't want to bow. I enjoy being covetous. I enjoy dividing people. I would rather wear the old."

The Scripture says,

"No, you put on the new. Wear that garment you got when you received Christ."

Remember, you understood at that time what was causing you all the pain. Don't go back to what caused you all the pain.

Well, the second thing I want you to see is before I can put on the new, as he says in verse 24, I have to put off the old. I want to talk about that old garment just for a little bit. In Eph 4:22 it says,

"that, in reference to your former manner of life."

The word **manner of life** is [anastrophe](#). It always means everything you do, think, and say. We are in regard to that. He says,

"you **lay aside** the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of the deceit."

OLD SELF

(OLD MAN)

Remember, that word "accordance with" is not "out of." It is "in accordance with." You mean as evil as the flesh can be, it is still continually being corrupted? That old man is getting worse and worse and worse." That is exactly what I see that it saying in Scripture. Let's walk through it. The "old self" there translated in the New American Standard is really "old man." The word literally is new man and old man, not old self and new self. This old man, which you used to be, that man which was in Adam, needs to be taken off because now you have been placed into Christ. Take that old man off. But I tell you what, if you are not sick of the old man yet, you will be when I finish this verse.

Let me show you what I get out of that verse. Paul is trying to show you how rotten the old man is. It is the picture of something that is very putrid and is in the process of rotting. The idea of this word is of a dead corpse or cadaver that is now rotting and decaying and stinks and it is getting worse all the time. If you want to go back and put the old garment on, help yourself. But I want to tell you, when you do, you are going to smell up relationships. There is going to be an odor about you that is going to be putrid and rotten. Hebrews says don't ever let a root of bitterness develop among you because when it comes up, it is going to defile men.

If you take a barrel of apples and throw a rotten one in it, you've got exactly the picture right here. People who won't put on the new garment are the people who are causing all the rot in the body of Christ. This is pretty heavy stuff. You know the Holy Spirit inspired this. The Holy Spirit doesn't mince any words, does He? He just tells you what the old life is like. Folks, we have been saved out of that. Thank God we have been saved out of it. Don't think for a second that there is anything there for you when you go back and put on that old garment.

Paul uses the term "old man" three times. In Romans 6, in Colossians 3 and in Ephesians 4. I want you to go back to Romans 6 and see if I can explain it. Just like the new man, I have put him on. Now I have to put him on. I have to choose to put him on. It is my responsibility. I have put him on, positionally. Experientially, I choose to do it every day. The same is true about the putting on of the old man.

Romans 6:6 says,

"knowing this, that our old man [or self as it is translated] was crucified with *Him*, that our body of sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

In God's reckoning, the old man died with Christ on the cross. In that death, God put an end to the old creation in Adam and now replaces it with a new creation in Christ. It depends on which side of the cross that you are on. If you have been taken out of Adam, you have been put into Christ. The old man is dead. He is powerless in the believer's life. However, it's mark is left on us in the lust of our flesh. So even though it has been put off, we must now choose to put it off. The way we do it is by choosing against what our flesh wants and choosing what the Lord God desires in our hearts. It is the same idea of putting on and putting off. We have put on and now we need to put off. It has been put off, but now we need to put it off in our life.

So therefore, we reckon ourselves to be dead to sin. Do you realize that you don't have to lust, men? You don't have to be in bondage to that immorality. You don't have to be that way. You are a new person in Christ. It has been rendered powerless in your life. The only reason it has any power over you at all is because you choose to let it do so. That is all. You don't have to covet. You don't have to throw rocks at your house every time you go home because you want a bigger one. You don't have to live that way any more. You can be content wherever you are. You don't have to live under that bondage anymore. If you are bitter and it is ruining relationships around you and other people know about it, you don't have to live that way. You have been set free, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. You are no longer to be held hostage to sin anymore. It doesn't have to rule over you.

My encouragement to you is wear the right garment. When you go to a restaurant the waitress who walks over to you may be deceived and blind in sin, as Titus 3:3 says. You don't know that but maybe you sense that there is no life in this person. Remember you used to be that way. But now that you have come out of it, God sends us back into that world to put a brand new garment on to show them that there is another way that they can live if they know Christ, the Christ that you know.

Ephesians 4:22-27: A BRAND NEW WAY OF LIFE, PART 3

by Dr. Wayne Barber

When we received Christ, we got a brand new garment. Once Christ comes in, that garment is present. Christ is the very fabric of that garment.

When I choose to let Jesus be Jesus in my life, when I choose against my flesh, when I choose to say "yes" to Him, strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of God, then I begin to live a brand new way.

When you receive Christ, you have the garment to wear that identifies you wherever you are. It is a brand new lifestyle. But how

many Christians are still trying to go back and put on those old clothes, still trying to dress the way they want to dress? What an indictment Paul gives to us. He warns them in verses 17-19 not to go back and live like they used to live. It says in verse 22:

"in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit."

In other words, the more you choose the old flesh rather than Jesus, choosing what you want, the more you begin to be caught up in that downward spiral which is constantly being corrupted.

That verse talks about the **lust of deceit**. Did you know that all of the lusts that we have to contend with are deceitful? They make you think that you want something and pull you out of your walk with God. The moment you get whatever you were lusting for, you realize that it is not what you thought it really was! Now you are caught once again in the current of that putrid stream which is constantly being corrupted.

Point number one: We started off by saying that we must put on the new man. Living the brand new life is like putting on a brand new garment.

Point number two: Before I can put on the new, I have to take off the old. In both of these situations, I have already put on the new man and taken off the old. However, we must appropriate this now and bring positional truth down to experiential truth. The Christian life is a walk. It is moment by moment making that constant choice to make sure I am dressed properly in the garment of the Lord Jesus being Jesus in my life. It is a brand new way of living.

Point number three: Ephesians 4:23. We have to be, first of all, renewed in our minds. We are not going to put on these new clothes until we start thinking differently. Remember the lost world is darkened in its understanding. We have been enlightened in ours. We can understand what is right and what is wrong. We understand now what God requires. The more we get into His Word, the more we allow our minds to be renewed, and the more we are going to "dress properly" and live properly. The world looks at us and sees the witness of Jesus as a living reality in us.

Let's look at verse 23:

"and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

That word "renewed" caught my attention. It is not the same word as Romans 12:1 or Romans 12:2. Certainly your mind goes there. Romans says,

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

There are two words that are used in that little word "renewing": *ana*, which means again and *kainos*, which means renew. In other words, it is a qualitatively brand new mind. He is telling the Romans,

"You are going to have to completely change your way of thinking."

Perhaps he is saying something else here to the Ephesians. It's almost the same thing. The Ephesians are already changing their minds. They are already faithful servants as verse 1 of chapter 1 tells us. He uses another word in Ephesians 4:23 which comes from *ana* and *neos*. *Neos*, means new, not so much qualitatively new, but thinking in other ways. In other words, you continually let your mind be changed. It has already started with this qualitative, brand new way of thinking. Now you continue to let God rebuild and renovate your mind.

You see, the problem with us is the way we have been trained to think. If we don't think God's way, then obviously we are going to live wrong. Proverbs says, "As a man thinks, so is he." Certainly my heart is to be surrendered, but I need to get into God's Word and let God's thoughts replace my thoughts, qualitatively and otherwise. I continually grow as the Holy Spirit of God begins to teach me how to wear my new garment.

I think there are some steps there. First of all, we have to take off the old. Then we put on the new. Then thirdly, before we are ever going to consistently do that, we have to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. Now the word "spirit" there tends to refer to the rational part of the mind. So I think what Paul is saying here is that in the area where you decide, in the area where you make decisions, in that area of your mind, you need to be consistently renewed so that you will continually put on the new garment of the brand new behavior.

A TRANSFORMED TONGUE

Well, then Paul moves on and begins to show us, with the fourth point, what the new garment looks like. In verse 25 he says,

"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one *of you*, with his neighbor, for we are members of one

another."

The first characteristic of this garment is we are going to have a transformed tongue. The Bible tells us that what the mouth speaks identifies what is on the inside of the heart. James 3:8 says

"no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison."

If you ever see somebody in control of their tongue, they must be under the control of the Holy Spirit of God

The first thing Paul says about the characteristics of the garment is, speak truth and stop speaking falsehood. Let's identify here why it is a characteristic of this new garment. If you go back to John 8:44, the same word (truth) is used to identify its source. Remember Ephesians 2 says we were once dead in our trespasses and in our sins. Of course, then we were of our father the devil.

"You mean to tell me that lost people have a father who is called the devil?"

That is exactly right. If you don't know Christ, may I just encourage you to realize that you are already in that downward spiral, in that trap of being deceived by the devil himself. This comes right out of the devil himself. People who lie find their roots in the devil himself. Look at John 8:44:

"You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

When you find a person who does not tell the truth, who lies in any area of his life, you find a person who is no longer being controlled by the Spirit of God. He has now subjected himself under the influence of the devil who is the father of all lies.

If you will look in Colossians 3:9 it documents that we were once like that. It was part of the fabric of the old man. It certainly isn't a fabric of the new man. Colossians 3:9 says,

"Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices."

We know the root of a lying tongue is the devil and we also know that it is seen and manifested in the old man, the old garment. When I take off the garment of Christ, when I put on those wrong clothes, immediately I am going to see lies and deceit come out of my mouth.

Look in 1 John 2:27:

"And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."

Folks, listen, there is no lie, there is no deceit in truth. There is no deceit in the written truth, the living truth. There is no lie in that. Where do lies come from? They come from the pit of hell. What is it representative of? The old man, the way we used to live. It was a characteristic of man to just simply lie. But when you come into the truth, there can be no lie in your life.

Look at 1 Peter 2:22. Jesus lives in us in the person of His Spirit. We find the word again, and it speaks directly of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a prophecy of Him which was fulfilled in Him. In the Lord Jesus there was no deceit. Peter says,

"WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH."

That tells me two things. First of all, the truthfulness of our Lord Jesus Christ and His inability to lie, but secondly the truthfulness of His Word, for in what He spoke there was no lie.

LIES ALWAYS PROTECT THE FLESH

Folks, you can't lie when Christ is in your heart because lying is something that is a nature of Adam and the nature of the devil himself. He is the father of it. It came in through Adam. When God came to Adam he called out,

"Adam, where are you? What have you done?"

Adam replied,

"It is her fault."

I mean, it is immediate. I don't know why Paul started with this as the first characteristic of the garment. I think it is because all lying and all deceit protect the flesh rather than confess the flesh. It is so easy to tell a lie, isn't it? Just tell a partial truth. You can't do it when Jesus Christ is in your life.

You see, lies always protect the flesh. The flesh is filled up with lustful deceit and doesn't want to be exposed. So when you come and bow down before Christ and begin to put that brand new garment on, it won't let you lie. If you do, immediately you know you have grieved the Holy Spirit of God. Isn't it amazing, he starts right there?

I want you to see something in Ephesians 6. Ephesians 4 and 6 are saying the same thing!

In Ephesians 4, Christ's life is your garment.

In Ephesians 6 Christ is your armor.

It is the same thing.

The whole book of Ephesians is like a fabric that is so woven together. You can't disassociate chapter 6 from chapters 3 and 4. It all blends together. It says over in chapter 6 concerning the armor,

"having girded your loins with truth."

How many times have you heard that preached that that is the Word of God? There is no definite article there. God is trying to say,

"A person who is wearing the garment of Christ is transparent and open and honest and does not lie about anything, especially with his lips. He doesn't speak deceit."

First of all then, we have a transformed tongue.

A CONTROLLED TEMPER

Secondly we have a controlled temper.

"Wait a minute. Are you telling me I can have a temper and it still be under control?"

Yes. Look at what he says here in verse 26:

"Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger."

We think anger in itself is sin. No. It is what you do with anger. I am grateful for all the ones who have worked for the Pro-life cause. Hey, folks, we need to get mad. But what you do with that anger? James 1:20 says

"the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

In other words, this anger is not really just you getting mad. It is the Lord Jesus in you. He was not a mild person all the time. He drove the moneychangers out of the Temple. This Man Who came to this earth, the God-Man Who was so virtuous, stood in a perfect balance between the extremes. He got angry, but He knew what to be angry at. He knew the target of His anger. He knew exactly how to express that anger. He never sinned at all.

So we are to be angry, but not sin with the anger. Go back to Ephesians 4:2. Here is a good example of it. It is all in relationships. Obviously it means that provocation has taken place. Somebody has provoked you. Look at what he says:

"with all humility and gentleness, with patience."

Those three words right there show you that somebody is standing in the balance. They are upset. Nobody likes provocation. But they are letting their righteous anger rise up to where they know that they are not going to hate the sinner. They are going to hate the sin and still love the sinner. They are willing to trust God through the whole thing. The word "gentleness" simply means an inward calm so tamed by the Holy Spirit of God that when it happens, you know God is in control. Now that is a person who knows how to be angry, but not to sin with the anger. It is not really him being angry. It is the Lord Jesus rising up in him. There is such a thing as a righteous anger, and I believe that is what he is talking about. But there is no sin with that righteous anger.

The word "sin" means missing the mark. We don't miss the mark with righteous anger within us.

Paul goes on to say in Ephesians 4:26,

"do not let the sun go down on your anger."

Personally, in my own heart, Paul is telling to me,

"When the sun goes down, make sure your spirit is quiet. Don't let the sun go down on your anger."

You know, my wife and I have done this over the years. We have tried never to go to bed without solving whatever difference we have. We have tried our best to make sure that we have dealt with what has angered us. We try to disassociate it from unrighteous anger and righteous anger to make sure we don't sin with our anger. We have not always done it, but it has been a helpful thing in

our marriage.

You have a controlled temper when you have on the new garment of Christ. Not only do you have a transformed tongue, but you have a controlled temper.

A FRUSTRATED TEMPTER

Thirdly, we have a frustrated tempter. Oh, listen, when you start putting on the new garment, you are going to frustrate the devil. Do you want to frustrate him? I do. As a matter of fact, I love to irritate him. If you want to irritate him, put on the new garment and walk the brand new life. Let Jesus be Jesus in your life, and you are going to frustrate him.

Look at what Paul says in verse 27:

"and do not give the devil an opportunity."

Now let me explain that a little bit. There are people who say because he uses the word "opportunity," which is translated "place" 72 times in the Scriptures, then that word has to mean "place" here. That means that somehow a Christian can let the demons of hell get inside their life. Now that is being taught whether you believe that or not. Some of you may say, "Amen, preach the truth!" A lot of people say a demon can get inside of a Christian. This is one of the verses they use. They want to translate it "don't give a place," as if you are going to open up a room and let him in.

The New American Standard translators did us justice by translating it "opportunity." That turns your mind from the devil getting inside to where you become a pawn in his hands in order to bring division rather than to build up. If you can find anywhere in the Word where that word is used in any other way other than "place," you don't have a case. You cannot force the fact that it means "place" in this context.

Let me show you two other places where it is used and could not mean "place" in those contexts. It is the same Greek word, though. Look in Acts 25:16:

"And I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face, and has an **opportunity** to make his defense against the charges."

Guess what? That's the same word.

Look in Hebrews 8:7. It is used a little differently even there. In the context it is very clear. Right before the verse that tells us we are of a better covenant, it says,

"For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, there would have been no **occasion** sought for a second."

"Occasion" is the same word. Why do people think in Ephesians 4:27 the Scriptures are teaching that a Christian can have a demon? Folks, that is not even in the context of the chapter. The whole chapter is putting on the new garment. The whole chapter is saying,

"Listen, don't go back and live like you used to live. If you do, the devil then has an opportunity to influence you wrongly into doing things that you shouldn't do, into doing things that are a downward spiral. You don't want to go back into that. He works in the context of the world. He works in the **pulpit** of the world in order to tempt the flesh. Don't give him an opportunity to do what he wants to do."

What is the word for "**devil**" there? There are many words for devil. You can go to Revelation and find out that he is the old dragon. You can find out he is a lot of things. What is the word used here? Well, the word translated "devil" is the word *diabolos*. That tells you a whole lot about what the author is trying to say. Why did he choose that name and not other names? Why didn't he call him Satan? Why didn't he say demon? He didn't. He said devil. Why?

The word **diabolos** comes from *dia*, which means through, and *ballo*, which means to cast, and so this combination means to cast in between. And what does this do? Divide. What happens when a Christian puts on the wrong garment? What is he doing to the body of Christ? What is the context of Ephesians 4? There are sixteen verses on doing what? Preserving the unity of the Spirit of God. Now there is a warning. Don't go back and live like you used to live. Put on the new garment.

What is in the new garment? Honesty, no lying. You don't protect the flesh. You confess it. Not only that, you have a controlled temper. Then when you do that you have frustrated the tempter. He can't get into the body of Christ. He can't begin to tempt you to where you fall again. You start walking and living like you ought to walk and like you ought to live.

PUT ON THE NEW GARMENT

Put on the new garment. Put on the new clothes and you will have a transformed tongue. What you say to people will edify and not tear down. You will have a controlled temper. You will be angry, but it will be God's anger in you and you won't miss the mark with your anger. Thirdly, you will definitely frustrate the tempter because he doesn't know how to handle you when Jesus is Jesus in your life.