

A New Set of Clothes

Ephesians 4:17-32

Jason Wright and Kayley Cromwell are responsible for today's sermon introduction. They are getting married today, & I have to be downtown at 1:15 to officiate. That's why I'm wearing my new suit. I thought about changing after corporate worship, but I decided against it because it requires too much effort, and it serves as a visual illustration for today's sermon.

We're talking about a new set of clothes in Eph 4. Paul uses this metaphor, of "taking off and putting on" (clothes) to talk about what happens when you become a Christian.

Of course, he's not talking about physical clothes, but spiritual clothes – for a person may change their outer appearance and be a fifthly spiritually (like the Pharisees).

We are often told “The clothes make the man,” which isn't true physically, but it is true spiritually.

The "clothes of Christ" changes everything. When we put on Christ, we receive a new spiritual identity and must now live differently.

When a **soldier, or fireman, policeman**, or an astronaut, puts on his respected uniform, there are new expectations and responsibilities corresponding to his identity.

When a Christian puts off that corrupt garment of the old self (22), and puts on the new self recreated in God's image (24), he then has new expectations and responsibilities corresponding to his identity.

Paul uses this picture of “putting off and putting on” elsewhere.

- “You have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self” (Col 3:9-10).
- “Let us cast off works of darkness and put on the armor of light... Put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 13:12, 14).
- “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Gal. 3:26-27; cf., Rom. 6:3, 6).

Galatians 3 and Romans 13 speaks of being clothed with “Christ” and Ephesians and Colossians refer to the “new self,” but the idea is the same.

- We have put on a new identity; we are new creations in Christ.
- So this text is all about our new identity in Christ, and what it looks like to live out this new identity.
- The first paragraph is the doctrinal section, explaining our new identity (17-24).
- The second paragraph is the practical section, illustrating what it looks like to live out this identity. (formerly, but now)

#1: LIVE OUT YOUR NEW IDENTITY (17-24)

Paul gives the negative, how we must no longer live (17-19), and then gives the positive, how we must live out this new identity (20-24).

A. Don't Live As a Non-Christian (17-19)

Paul begins with a strong, urgent exhortation “**Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as Gentiles do.**”

Some translations read “**insist**” instead of “**testify**.” He is stressing the importance of his exhortation. Then he adds, “**in the Lord**” pointing to the his source of authority. **Jesus Christ the Lord, urges to no longer live as pagans.**

This word “**walk**” is used several times in Ephesians. We are conduct our lives in a way that honors Christ.

A few years ago, Kimberly's parents bought a Karaoke game for the family Christmas time. You were to sing, and then you were given a score. Immediately, I new I was the underdog. Kimberly did a Selene Dione song, and got like a 90 out of 100. I didn't know what to do, so I went with Right Said Fred, but didn't score well. Then I tried Johnny Cash, “I walk the Line” and actually scored well. I have since become a bit of a Johnny Cash fan. A man who wears black (“for the poor and beaten down”), and who sings deeply. I was thinking about “I Walk the Line.” It was his first number one song He wrote it backstage just after being married, as a pledge of devotion to his

wife. He wrote, “Since you’ve been mine I walk the line.... Oh, I admit I’m a fool for you, since you’ve been mine, I walk the line.”

Something similar is going on here in Ephesians. Now that the Ephesians have entered a new relationship with Christ, they are to “walk the line.” They are to walk worthy of the calling with which they have been called (4:1). - a life of devotion to their Savior. Gentiles, as mentioned, could be used in an ethnic sense (2:11). But Paul also used it in a moral sense, similar to how we might use the word “pagan.” Paul didn’t want Christians to live like the surrounding non-believers.

In the second century, Christians would speak of themselves as “the third race” (Snodgrass, 229).

Verses 17-19 – Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians, and us, that before we came to Christ our **minds, feelings, and actions were dark**.

- **The mind**. He says that we lived in the **futility of our minds**. This means we lived **useless, worthless, meaningless lives**. One writer said that “**with one single word Paul describes the majority of the inhabitants of the Greco-Roman empire .. as aiming at silly methods with a meaningless goal**” (M. Barth, 2:499). What a description of futility! A foolish method aiming at a foolish goal.

We were also **darkened in understanding**. We had no light; we are **blacked out**. Sin produces a malfunction of the mind. (Snodgrass, 230)

- **The heart**. Paul says that the non-Christian is **alienated from the life of God**. Sin and unbelief separates us from God and others. We have no life. Our **hearts are dead**.

They also have a **hard heart, and have become calloused**. Unbelievers feel convicted, but do not respond. Then they tend to recruit others in on their sin. There have been opportunities and it is becoming calloused.

- **The actions**. The result of a dark mind, and a hard heart is this: **sensuality and every kind of impurity**. There is a lack of moral

restraint, and often leads to sexual obsession and total perversion of the way God made us.

This passage calls to mind Romans 1:18-32 and Galatians 5:16-21 and Eph. 5:3-12, which speaks of the corrupt nature of the flesh, and how idolatry leads to immorality.

Left to ourselves, we are vile. And even though some may be considered “less vile,” are still in need of Christ.

Everyone is in need of Jesus.

The good news in this passage is that **God can transform anyone** by his **grace!** Many in the **Ephesians church** matched this description, but **now they are new!**

The point is clear: **If God has made us new, we are to live an all-together different life. We are to image God.**

We are to think differently, respond to the truth differently, and act differently. God also enables us to live it by his **Holy Spirit** (cf., 4:29, 5:18).

It is good to enjoy things like entertainment, recreation, and the internet as gifts. We we should even use them for redemptive purposes, however we should not make them idols (sports, rock stars, or events as gods). We also should not participate in things that are explicitly pagan – in the world of movies, websites, books, or events. Paul told the Corinthians, “even pagans don’t do that” (1 Cor 5:1).

You are different, Christian. Your life is to bear no resemblance to unbelievers in these things.

To be clear, it is not that you should never be around unbelievers. You should! But like Jesus, the goal is to be separate from sin, even though we must not be isolated from unbelievers.

A. Live as a New Creation in Christ (20-24)

Paul now explains why we must not live as pagans: we have become new creations!

He says “but you – that is not the way you learned Christ.” Verses 20-24 are remarkable! He first describes coming to Christ, like going to a “**school**” (20-21). Then he gives us a picture of changing **clothes** – taking off an old garment of sinful vices to put away, and putting on graces of a Christian (22-24a). Then he speaks of the **new creation** (24b). Believers are to live out their new identity in Christ.

Remember Your Christ-Centered Education.

This education is not formal education, but transformational education. I'm following Stott's outline here.

1. **Christ is the Subject of the teaching**, (“you learned Christ, 20a).

This is a very unusual and awe-inspiring phrase.

Christianity is about **knowing** a living person, Jesus Christ (‘learned Christ’). O'Brien says, "The phrase ‘to learn a person’ appears nowhere else in the Bible and to date, has not been traced anywhere else in pre-biblical Greek documents” (324). Thielman says this is “**relational**” language (300). **We are not simply knowing about Christ, but knowing Christ.**

When you become a Christian, you didn’t merely learn about the teaching of Jesus, you also developed a relationship with him.

Paul says, “**assuming that you heard about him**” in the next phrase. It had been a long time since Paul was in Ephesus, and he knew that false teaching abounded. Not everyone knew the truth that was in Jesus – even those who might be gathered in a house church. He wants to make sure that they have come to know Christ.

So – have you? Have you come to know Jesus Christ? If not, then you can’t live this new life. It begins with conversion to Christ.

Christianity is not about (1) moral rule keeping, (2) religious attendance, (3) “the warm fuzzies,” (4) believing in a god, or (5) doing good things or (6) knowing facts *about Christ*. It’s about **knowing Christ**.

.See John 17:3. See, it isn't a plan, it's a person!

A little girl was getting a swine flu shot, and the nurse asked which arm do you want it in, sweetie? And she said, "in momma's arm." Momma can't take your shot; and she can't believe for you. Do you know Christ personally?

2. **Christ is the Teacher himself** ("you heard him," 21a.)

There's no preposition - "about." It's literally "You heard him." This phrase is also unusual and stunning. It is referring to gospel proclamation, and it seems to be more than that. It is that we hear *Christ himself* when his word is announced.

Thielman says, "As with that expression, the implication is that Christ is alive and that when one hears the gospel preached, as Paul assumes his readers have, one is put in touch with a living person."

Have you heard his voice? He is the one who comes to the dead and says "Lazarus, come forth." **Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice."**

3. **Christ is context of the teaching** ("you were taught in him," 21b).

"taught" - Paul is probably referring to the **ongoing instruction** that happens after you become a Christian.

But it's more than just ethics, for we were taught "in him."

That is, the teaching as taken place **in the sphere of the living Christ**, or to say it another way, **he is the one who makes it possible for us to live out ethical instruction.**

4. **Christ is the truth.**

The Result of teaching this is centered on Christ, that comes from Christ, and is in the context of Christ, is that you can be **assured that it is the truth because 'the truth is in Jesus' (21c) (Stott, 179).**

Coming to Christ, and learning him is coming to the truth. Paul called the gospel, “the word of truth” (1:13) and “the knowledge of the truth.”

Jesus said he was the truth (John 14:6).

This is the only use of the name “Jesus” where it occurs by itself in Ephesians. It seems deliberate. Paul is talking about the historical person, Jesus.

The truth is in a person, not an idea, many speak of the idea of the faith, “Christ’s principle within all of us,” a lot of metaphysical mumbo jumbo. The truth is in the one and only person, Jesus of Nazareth, born in Bethlehem, born of Mary, the son of a carpenter, who lived in sinless life, who died on a cross for sinners, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven – in human history. His life and death and resurrection has given us new life.

His example and his teaching shows us how we are to live this new life – the truth is in Jesus.

Put Off the Old, and Put on the New

Paul continues in the train of thought on teaching. He now amplifies his comments about **Christ-centered instruction**.

He uses three infinitives “to put off,” “to be renewed” and “to put on” (22-24). There is a discussion about how we should take these. **Should we take them as “imperatives” or as a description of what has already happened at conversion?**

The parallel text in Colossians 3:8-10 helps us understand it.

“But now you must get rid of all these things: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”

The command to put away particular sins (8-9a), is based in the fact that the old self *has already been removed* and the new self *has already been put on* (9-10). In Colossians, “the verbs are aorist

participles indicating what the Colossians did at the time of their conversion” (Stott, 180).

In other words, since we have put off the old, and have put on the new, we must put away sin practically, daily, continually. We must live differently since we are new people.

Stott summarizes my view, “It is because we have already put off our old nature, in that decisive act of repentance called conversion, that we can logically be commanded to put away all these practices which belong to that old, rejected life.” (180)

We can't give ourselves birth. God must do that. Our new creation identity is a work of God alone. Nevertheless, we have now a responsibility to live a way that is consistent with our new identity.

V. 22: The **old self** refers to all that we once were, mention in vs. 17-19. It is **corrupt** through “deceitful desires” (22). Put off this way of life! You don't swear that garment any longer!

V. 24: The **new self** refers to our new identity in Christ. Paul says it has been “created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (24).

The language recalls **Gen. 1:26**, “The God said, ‘Let us make man in our image and according to our likeness.’” Humanity was made in God's image (the imago Dei), but sin has corrupted us. Through Christ, we are re-created in the image of Christ.

After spending about 35 days in Ukraine, in effort to adopt our kids, we finally had permission to leave. All of the legal work was done. We had been visiting the kids everyday, but it was only for two hours. We were eager to take them to ourselves. We were eager to clean them up and give them some new clothes as well. In the orphanage where our four were from, the children had to leave every piece of clothing behind in the orphanage. So, Kimberly and I went to “Mother Care” to shop. I spent a sizeable amount of money (which scared me, as I thought about three girls having weddings and such!). I'll never forget going into Jana and Victoria's room and showing them their new clothes. They were so thrilled! They began

counting their pairs of socks. They laughed as they held up their new outfits. They had a new backpack with pencils and paper. They rushed into the bathroom, took off those old clothes, and put on the new ones! New identity. New Clothes. New life.

Praise God, we have put on Christ. We are new.

- The symbolism of taking off and putting on is like the picture of **baptism**. Some early traditions gave the baptized person a different garment after baptism.
- The Old Testament uses this metaphor of putting on particular virtues, especially God being clothed in majesty: Job 29:14, 40:10, Ps 93:1; 104:1, 132:9.

V. 23: Next, the old self is the life of corruption, the new self is a life of **renewal**. “to be renewed in the spirit of your minds.” In Colossians, Paul says, “Having put on the new self, renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created him.” (**Col. 3:10**).

“**be renewed**” is in the present tense, like “being corrupted,” in contrast to verses 22 and 24 which are aorists. The present tense is indicating that this renewal an ongoing process that God performs in us. We need a continual renewal of our mind.

We are created by God. But sin has separated us. But through Jesus we can be new creations, reflecting the glory of God – by living holy righteous lives as his redeemed image bearers.

Practically speaking, the primary means of ongoing transformation in our life is the **Word** and the **Spirit**. God does this work in us, but we also have the responsibility to setting our minds on things above. Romans 12:1-2 comes to mind, “be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” This means that true biblical change must not bypass the mind. **Any change that bypasses the spirit of the mind will not last.** (See verses on the mind: Rom. 12:2; Phil. 2:5; 4:8; Col. 3:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18, 4:16; Titus 3:5)

Your mind is a battleground “The mind of man is the battleground on

which every moral and spiritual battle is fought.” (J. Oswald Sanders)

Your Mind Drives Behavior. “Self-control is primarily mind-control.” (John Stott). “Every kidnapping was once a thought. Every extramarital affair was first a fantasy.” (Leslie Flynn)

Since the mind is so important, we must renew it, wash it, clean it, with the Word of God, and mediate on that which is good, right and true in order to live the new life.

Transition: We have come to know Christ. We are new creations. We have a mind that is being renewed. Because of this change, we are empowered to live out this identity in everyday life.

Verses 17-24 are absolutely essential because they tell us where the power for change comes! It comes from God.

Bob Newhart. Lady fears being buried alive in a box... "Has anyone ever tried to do that?" "No." "I'm going to give you two words. Take them to heart and apply them... – Stop it. You don't want to go through life like this do you? Well, stop it!"

We need more than “stop it.” We need a new heart. We need new desires. WE need a new mind & power. That's what you have when you come to Jesus. And we need something positive to replace sinful practices. Next paragraph shows us how we who have the power of the Spirit should now live.

#2: WAYS TO LIVE OUT YOUR NEW IDENTITY (25-32)

Paul says that the new walk is lived out as we replace sinful habits with actions that are righteous and holy. We could do an entire message series on this list, but I think Paul's point is to use them as a set of examples of what it looks like to lives as new creations in a broad sense, so I will run through them at once, as well. We shouldn't limit the new lifestyle only to these things, but we should certainly give them careful attention, just as Paul does.

Before we look at these concrete examples, keep a few things in mind.

First, these practical exhortations are **individual and relational**. Our sin affects others negatively, just as our righteousness will bless others positively.

- Keep Ephesians 4:1-16 in mind. It was about unity. Here are some ways to have healthy relationships and help maintain unity.

Second, notice how there is a **negative first, and then a positive**. That's important. The goal is not just to say "no" to sin. It is also about saying "yes" to God. We must not just throw our dirty clothes in the hamper, we put on the new suit.

Third, there is a **theological reason** given for why you should throw off the sinful vice, and put on the Christian action – either stated explicitly or implicitly.

What I mean is:

- Paul just doesn't say "Put away falsehood" (25). He relates it to the doctrine of the church "for we are members of one another" (25).
- He just doesn't say "Don't lose your temper" (26). He relates it to the theological truth of the "devil" (27).
- Then when talking about "stealing" (28), he speaks of the doctrine of work (which is the doctrine of creation), and stewardship and care for the poor.
- When talking about unhealthy speech, he relates it to grieving the Holy Spirit (29-30). That's theology.
- Then on the issue of forgiveness, it is rooted in the doctrine of the cross and divine forgiveness (31-32).

Do you see this? Our ethics and our theology are tied together.

Christians should not only live differently than unbelievers, but they also should live differently – for different reasons.

- We believe in God, sin, the devil, the Spirit, the church, and Christ's death on the cross. These truths should affect the way we live.

Now, let's move through these Christian behaviors quickly. I'll state the sin to put off, with the holy habit to put on.

1. **Replace lying with truth-telling. (25)**

This main imperative is a quote from Zechariah "Speak truth ton one another." (8:16)

Paul adds the weight of the Old Testament to his ethical instruction here, and adds "for we are members of one another." Members of the community of faith are to be honest.

Just like God desired for Jerusalem to be a city of truth, so does he long for the church to be the same.

Falsehood – The word "falsehood" is actually "the lie" (singular), which is understood in the sense of "lying" (Snodgrass, 249). It may also have the idea of idolatry, exchanging the truth of God for a lie (Rom 1:25).

God hates lying. (Prov. 6:16-17; 12:22, 12:19; 20:17; 21:6). Satan is a liar. **When you tell the truth, you are imitating God, when you lie, you are imitating Satan.**

Truth: Truth has been emphasized already in **this chapter** (15, 21, 24). God's people are to be truth tellers.

Why? "We are members of one another." That means we depend on each other. Love each other, don't harm each other by speaking truth.

If my eye says to the hand, the iron is *not* hot, and the hand touches it, it affects my body. Since we are united together, false words hurt the whole body. Falsehood hurts unity; truth strengthens unity.

2. **Replace unrighteous anger with righteous anger. (26-27)**

This is an echo of Ps. 4:4. The Scriptures permit a particular type of anger, what you might call *righteous indignation*.

Is there such a thing as **righteous anger**? Yes. Someone said **“It’s when you get mad but you don’t cuss.”** Not exactly. It is a holy anger against sin.

We **need** to feel anger as Christians. If we are indifferent to injustice, then evil will prevail. Don’t encourage the spread of evil through your indifference.

We should hate sin, like God hates sin! David wrote, **“Hot indignation seizes me because the wicked forsake your law”** (119:53). **John Piper** adds that good anger is **“mingled with grief (Mark 3:5). Jesus expressed** righteous indignation when he turned over the tables in the temple in Mark 1. **Wilberforce had a holy anger against slavery. Luther had a holy anger against doctrinal corruption.**

Unrighteous Anger is mentioned in verse 31. **It is anger that is self-defensive and is out of control.** It will lead to murder, jealousy, envy, and a host of other sins. Don’t have unrighteous anger toward your brothers and sisters in the church, or toward your spouse.

To make sure that we keep our anger holy, Paul gives us three reminders:

1. **Do not sin.** This is not a license to throw a fit, seek revenge, and dishonor the name of God in public.
2. **Do not let the sun go down on your anger.** This does not mean that Eskimos at the North Pole may be angry and hold a grudge for six months while the sun is up (Piper). Paul is saying do not let it fester. **Resolve it quickly.** Even “good anger” can lead to problems like bitterness, so the time to get angry is very short!
3. **Do not give an opportunity to the devil.** Someone said, **“Don’t go to bed with unresolved conflict or else you will sleep with the devil.”** Seek forgiveness and reconciliation quickly. Satan would love to take your anger as an opportunity to make you violent and divisive.

3. **Replace stealing with working and giving. (28)**

Stealing: In first century in Asia Minor, it was so typical to steal. Paul is talking about breaking free from the norm of society. This was the eighth commandment, which had wide applications, as it still does for us.

It may be that Paul has day laborers and skilled tradesman in mind - whose work *was seasonal*. While they were out of work there was no governmental system to assist them, and many would be forced to steal in order to maintain themselves and their families.

If it had been part of the Christian's life before conversion, it had no place after words.

- **Acts 5:1-4**, The first sin of the early church was deception
- **Malachi 3:10** – stealing from God. How much of God's money will you keep?

Honest Work. Paul reminds the believers to need for honest work.

- **We are created to work (Gen 1-3).**
- **Work is a gift.**
- **Jesus worked as a carpenter/stone mason.**
- **Paul worked so that he wouldn't be a burden on the church (1 Cor. 9:15, 18).**
- **Work was highly valued in the Old Testament (Ex. 20:9).**
- **We are to work to provide. "Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty (Prov. 28:19). Those who won't work, shouldn't eat, Paul says (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).**

I would add to this that Christians should help one another find honest work.

Why work? So we may have something to contribute financially to those in need. I agree with Wesley, "Work as hard as you can, make as much as you can, then give as much as you can."

Here are the options:

- **You can steal to get – sin.**
- **You can work to get for yourself – consumerism.**
- **You can work to get, in order to give – Christianity.**
- Romans 12:3, "Contribute to the needs of the saints"

Who is a New Testament example of one who was converted and went from a stealer to a sharer? *Zaccheus*. What a remarkable story

of grace in his life. He was a taker, but was made into a giver because he met Jesus.

4. Replace corrupt talk with edifying talk. (29)

I used to have this verse above our TV in college because guys came to our room to play video games, and we were tired of the language. I'm not sure that I was using it rightly, but it did help me memorize it.

Corrupt Talk: This word means "rotten, putrid, filthy" (Hughes, 152). It is used in NT to refer to "**rotten fruit**" (Matthew 7:17-18) and "**rotten fish**" (Matthew 12:33-34) (O'Brien, 344)

- Rotten fruit (Katrina)
 - o Does not nourish – it makes you sick
 - o Comes from a diseased tree
 - o Smells horrible – trashy

Examples include but aren't limited to...

- Lying – already mentioned
- Abusive language
- Vulgar references - instead **thanksgiving (5:4), praise (19-20)**
- Vicious and unkind words
- Gossip
- Slander (James 4:11)

Jesus said that we will give an account on the final day for every careless word spoken (Matt. 12:36).

Augustine hung a sign on his dining room wall, "Whoever speaks evil of an absent man or woman is not welcome at this table" (Hughes, 153).

Edifying Talk:

- **Well chosen talk** – "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances" (Pro. 25:11)
- **Constructive Talk**. It's helpful and it builds up.
- **Encouraging Talk** – Much of leadership in the Christian life is about encouragement. It's about coming alongside of others. If your disposition is cynical and critical, and there's no warmth and

encouragement you won't be a good leader – in your job, in your family, or in a church (small group or large group).

- **People won't hear your corrections, or anything else, if there is no affirmation** (Crabtree).

In *Practicing Affirmation*, Sam Crabtree says, “We can sin in two ways: by idolatrous commendation (the praise of men), or by failing to commend the commendable” (13). And, “Generally, it is easier to practice affirmation early in a relationship and it can get harder later.” That’s probably true in a marriage or in a church.

Even the best of servants need encouragement. It has been widely reported how John Wesley encouraged Wilberforce to “Be not weary in well doing; go on in the name of God and the power of his might.” Of course, he did, and slavery was abolished.

Why edify?

- a. **That we may give grace to those who hear it.** Be a blessing. You are able to help them grow.
- b. **To not grieve the Holy Spirit.** He can be lied to, dishonored, and disobeyed.

Anything inconsistent with the Spirit's own nature grieves him.

Sins of the tongue, like lying, slander, gossip, evil speaking offends the Spirit and leads to the withdrawal of the influences of the Spirit.

The presence of the Spirit may be in the church, but with disharmony the Spirit shirks back and withdraws his effects.

D.L. Moody stated, “I remember one town that Mr. Sankey and I visited. For a week it seemed as if we were beating the air; there was no power in the meetings. At last, one day, I said that perhaps there was someone cultivating an unforgiving spirit. The chairman of our committee who was sitting next to me, got up and left the meeting right in view of the audience. The arrow had hit the mark, and gone home to the heart of the chairman of the committee. He at once hunted up this man and ask him to forgive him. He cam to me with tears in his eyes and said, ‘I thank God you ever came here.’ That night the inquiry room was full. (in Hughes, 151).

Do not grieve the Spirit by harboring bitterness.

Instead, Be sensitive to the one who sealed you for the day of redemption.

Walk by the Spirit, not according to the flesh (Gal. 5).

Ask this question, "Will what I'm about to do please the Spirit, or grieve the Spirit?"

5. Replace bitterness and rage with kindness and forgiveness (31-32)

Get Ride of Rage: Paul possibly lists these as increasing stages of anger, but since there's an overlap to them, I'm not sure that he intended that. Nevertheless, this is a general pattern is it not?

- **resentful attitude (bitterness)**
- **indignant outburst (wrath)**
- **festering anger (anger),**
- **public shouting (clamor),**
- **abusive language (slander)**
- **hostility (malice)**

These attitudes are to be "put away" like a filthy garment.

Put on Kindness and Forgiveness

- As Christ-followers, we are to put on his character, which includes kindness and forgiveness (Titus 3).
- It is God's kindness that leads us to repentance. (Rom 2:4)
- "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and rich in love." (Ps 145:8). "If you kept a record of sins who could stand. But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared." (Ps 130:3-4)
- God is kind and forgiving, and we are to imitate him. Then Paul adds that "God in Christ forgave you."

Why? Because Christ forgave you (cf., Col 3:13)

- **If Jesus can forgive you as rotten as we were, then there is nothing for which we should not forgive another person.**
- **Jesus taught us to dwell on his forgiveness of us. That his forgiveness should compel us to forgive others – when we consider what a great debt we owed (Matt. 6:12, 14-15; 18:21-35; Luke 6:36).**
- Forgiveness is about applying the gospel. Some will say things like, **“You should forgive that person because you don’t want to turn out like that bitter person who never forgave her ex-husband.”** That’s actually making yourself superior. It’s self-glory. “Look at me. I forgive, and she didn’t.” A gospel approach is – Christ has forgiven me; there’s no person that I can’t forgive.” That is about Christ, not self.
- Do not hold a grudge. Don’t do as the country song says, **“Bury the hatchet but leave the handle sticking out.” Bury it.**

This doesn’t mean there shouldn’t be **consequences** for offenders. Sometimes there should be. Don’t confuse pardon for forgiveness. A person can be forgiven and still be sent to jail. In that sentencing there still shouldn’t be maliciousness in the heart of the offended. And even when the offender is sentenced, the Christian should desire to see the offender recognize his or her sin and repent. .

There is nothing like the forgiveness of Jesus. Think on his kindness, his love and his forgiveness into your heart daily. It will change you.

It will make you like him.

That’s what we will look at the beginning of chapter 5.

So what are you wearing? Have you come to know Christ? Are you dressed in his righteousness?

If so, live out your new identity as new creations in Christ, for the good of others and the glory of God.