

The Application of Putting Off and Putting On Ephesians 4:25-32

Ephesians 4:25-32 (ESV) Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. [26] Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil. [28] Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. [29] Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. [30] And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31] Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. [32] Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Introduction

- A. Over 20 plus years ago my pastor introduced me to the writings of Dr. Jay Adams. Jay Adams was a pastor and counselor with a concern for secular influence in the church.
1. Jay Adams introduced me to the biblical concept of putting off and putting on. This concept would prove to revolutionize my life as a Christian.
 - The basic idea was that we do not change only by stopping an action (say anger).
 2. In the context in which I was raised there was more passion for things the Christian should not do than there was for doing the right things (and noticeably so).
 - Putting off was emphasized; putting on was not. The fruit tends to be either moralism (an attainable standard) or legalism (favor with God by rules). We boast.
- B. Our aim at Living Hope is to avoid both moralism and legalism. How do we do that?
1. We do this by understanding our position in Christ which Ephesians 1-3 describes brilliantly. We have been saved by lavish grace (CARS). We were dead in sins but now we are alive.
 2. But here Christians often get confused (we are called sheep with good reason). We have not yet arrived at glorification (heaven). We will! But not yet.
- C. The Christian is a new creation but we are at war.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

1. How we understand 'new' will shape our lives. New means alive in Christ spiritually but we continue to have enemies like the world, the flesh and Satan (powerless).
2. We are now to be what we are. Truth is meant to be lived. There is work to be done. That work is putting off the old man and putting on the new (sanctification).

Philippians 2:12-13 (ESV) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, [13] for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

- D. The phrase "put off" and "put on" occurs in Ephesians 4:22-24. The thought in mind is like taking off an old set of clothes and putting on a new set of clothes.
1. Two weeks ago (Ephesians 4:17-24) we saw that we (those who are Christians) must no longer

walk as the Gentiles do. There is a new way to live.

2. The entire remainder of Ephesians is simply working out the details of putting off the old man and putting on the new.
- E. Here is Ephesians 4:25-32 Paul describes 5 specific ways we are to live as Christians.
1. My title is **The Application of Putting Off and Putting On**. I plan to show you the pattern, the specific application and the motive.

I. The pattern is essential.

- A. By giving us these five examples Paul is not seeking to give us an exclusive list. This is why the pattern matters. The pattern is true for every circumstance in life.
1. The Christian life is simple. Not easy, but simple.
- B. What is the pattern? Paul (and always remember God is speaking) gives the negative, then the positive, and then the reason.
1. When we teach our children well we do the same thing. When they are young we train them to listen to our voice (hopefully).

Ex: Ryan, don't touch the bookshelf. Or, the hot stove. Why? Because I said so is more than adequate for toddlers.
 2. When our children are older they are best served by the pattern Paul employs here in Ephesians. The pattern is the negative, then the positive, and then the reason.

Ex: Don't date (negative), treat the opposite sex like brothers and sisters (positive), because of purity and aiming for the best marriage possible if marriage comes your way (why).
- C. Our hearts are often enticed by that which is forbidden. It would not be temptation if something within us was not attracted. God always has our very best interests at heart.

John 13:17 (ESV) If you know these things, blessed [happy] are you if you do them.

II. From the pattern to the specific application.

- A. This will describe the way the Christian is to live life. Keeping the pattern in mind (negative, positive, reason) we may now look at specific application.
1. One, put away falsehood and speak the truth with your neighbor. Why? Because we are members one of another. Trust is essential for fellowship.
 - Lies, exaggerations or withholding information with a view to deceive.

Ex: You always or you never ...
 2. Two, in your anger do not sin. Deal with it by the end of the day. Why? So you give no opportunity to the devil. Anger destroys relationships.
 - Anger is an emotion that unchecked will destroy us. We could use more indignation at evil (say abortion) but it isn't personal. We do not seek revenge.

3. Three, don't steal. Rather, we should work. Why? So we can share with those in need.
 - The word used for labor means to work hard to exhaustion. Honest work means work that is profitable to others.

Ex: I am grateful my work was always around the essentials. I designed and sold equipment for bakeries and ice cream plants.
4. Four, no corrupting speech but only speak that which builds up. Why? That we may be a means of grace to our fellow believers.

Proverbs 15:23 (ESV) To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!

- Our speech reveals our heart and who can control their tongue?
5. Five, do not grieve the Holy Spirit which malice and anger and bitterness and slander will do. Rather be tenderhearted, kind and forgiving. Why? God has forgiven you.

Ex: The Amish gave a powerful demonstration of forgiveness to the world for a terrible act of evil (have to). They said it is harder to forgive one another (but works).

 - We grieve the Spirit when we ignore Him. Our actions reveal our awareness (or lack of it) of His constant presence.
- B. I said the Christian life is simple but not easy. This list of commands seems to make life more complex. It will be unless we see and understand the motive.

III. The motive.

- A. If we don't get the motive behind these commands we may be overwhelmed as we consider how we should respond in various situations.
1. If we would read on (see Ephesians 5:1-2) we would see that the motive is love. In every situation we are to do that which is in the best interests of our fellow believers.
 2. The Scriptures tell us this again and again. It cannot be missed.

Matthew 22:36-40 (ESV) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" [37] And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Galatians 5:14 (ESV) For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (ESV) If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. [2] And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. [3] If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

- B. The faithful Christian is not first concerned about themselves. The Christian does not contend for his or her rights. He or she has learned and is learning to die to themselves daily.

Luke 9:23-24 (ESV) And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. [24] For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will

save it.”

1. The point is simply that we consider others more important than ourselves. We care for others first. The point is living with the interests of others in mind.
2. Who can do this? Jesus Christ did this perfectly. He calls us to follow in His steps.

Ex: The cross is the focal point of the work of Jesus Christ. On the cross, unjustly charged and accused, “Father forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing.”

C. Jesus Christ was consumed with zeal for bringing glory to God His Father. Jesus laid aside every right He had.

1. The Christian life is not about you and your rights. The Christian life is about loving God and loving others. God is your defender.
2. Unity, purity and the glory of God all matter more than me getting my way.

Close

A. That God in Christ has forgiven me is more amazing than anything else I know. I am sure that God did not forgive me because I was somehow impressive.

1. I am therefore free to forgive others and to be kind and tenderhearted. When someone asks us for forgiveness, recount this amazing truth. God in Christ forgave you!

Ex: The brother of the prodigal son didn’t get it (see Luke 15).

Ex: The unforgiving servant didn’t get it (see Matt 18:23-35).

Matthew 18:21-35 (ESV) Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" [22] Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. [23] "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. [24] When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents [20 year’s pay]. [25] And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. [26] So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' [27] And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. [28] But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii [one day’s pay], and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' [29] So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' [30] He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. [31] When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. [32] Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. [33] And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' [34] And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. [35] So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

2. Do we get it? If we do it will be demonstrated in our lives by the way we treat one another. In particular, with the way we forgive others.

B. Questions for our consideration.

1. Is there anyone you have not forgiven?

- What if I was sinned against (terribly) and they didn't acknowledge it yet? The point is to be more aware of your sin and forgiveness.
2. Is there any reason why the Holy Spirit would be grieved by your life?
- Consider taking the first step towards reconciliation. Revenge or punishment is not an acceptable option because Christ took our punishment (those closest to you?).
- C. Grace is available for repentance. Next week we will look more closely at putting on the love of Jesus Christ.

Pray