

## Put off the old self.

In Ephesians 4:22-24 Paul tells his listeners that if they have truly understood the gospel, they will “put off their old self” and “put on their new self.” This is because of the self-deception of sin. When we interact with sin it forms callouses on our hearts. Those callouses cause a darkening of the mind in which we choose not to know the truth about ourselves and the world (Ephesians 4:18-19). The result of this self deception is the belief:

*“**We** are good just the way **we** are.”*

Meaning I people who can tolerate the same sin as I can are good people. Evil in the world comes from **other bad people who are not like us.**

This is self-deception. In reality all have sinned. Evil has penetrated so deeply into our hearts that even our righteous actions are often self-serving, and our pure motives are self-deceived.

Last week we focused on *putting off the old self*. Rather than feeling guilty about our sin and resolving not to repeat it through moral effort, God invites our minds to be renewed as we ask:

- Why did I commit that sin?
- How am I not trusting God?
- Why wouldn't I do that if I did trust God?

As we learn to trust him more fully, our minds are renewed and we are able to walk away from our sin.

This week we will talk about putting on the new self. Who are we becoming?

## Put on the new self.

*“and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” - Ephesians 4:24 ESV*

The new self is the part of ourselves that was “created after the likeness of God.”

### ***Our new self is our true self.***

Sin corrupts who we truly are with fears, lies, and compulsive behaviors. Being free of these things allows us to discover who we were created to be:

- Righteous – Morally good and of benefit to everyone, praiseworthy.
- Holy – Special, unique, sacred, one-of-a-kind.

Jesus invites us to discover our **heroic selves** in Him.

## How?

*“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.” - Ephesians 5:1 ESV*

**Be imitators of God:** we look at the character of God and we copy it.

**As beloved children:** it's never God against you, always you and God against your sin.

*“18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. **For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.** 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 **Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.**” - Romans 7:18-20 ESV*

**It's never God against you, always you and God against your sin.**

## Imitating God's Love

*2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Paul always connects love with self-sacrifice. Christ *gave himself up* for us and in this *he loved us*.

**Imitating God's love means learning to limit ourselves to serve other people.**

**In Forgiveness:** We imitate God's love by limiting our right to revenge.

**In Charity:** We imitate God's love by limiting ourselves financially for others.

**In Humility:** We imitate God's love by limiting our right to comfort.

**All of these reveal sin callouses in our hearts that don't come out in misbehavior.**

## Imitating God's Light

*“3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. 5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.” - Ephesians 5:3-11*

Paul returns to walking away from darkness (sin) because they are now light (righteousness and holiness). Paul returns now because it is the counterbalance to walking in love.

*“This is just the way I am.*

***We** are good just the way **we** are.”*

**When we integrate our sin into our selves,  
we give up the heroic people God created us to be.**

*13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,*

*“Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.” - Ephesians 5:13-14 ESV*

**When we allow Christ’s light to shine on our darkness,  
He transforms that darkness into light as we “wake up.”**

Examples:

- When I exposed my unfruitful dishonesty to God, I became awake to all the tricks of dishonesty. Learning to resist the temptation made me a truth-teller.
- When my mom exposed her unfruitful fear to God, she became awake to all the tricks of fear. Learning to resist the temptation made her courageous.

## Imitating God’s Wisdom

*15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

Paul uses the old testament metaphor of a walk to describe our lives. We each find ourselves in this life on a walk with God. The circumstances of that walk are intentional. This is not a mistake, it is a deployment.

**We are to live on purpose.**

## Wine vs. The Spirit – two ways of dealing.

*18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. - Ephesians 5:18-21 ESV*

Paul compares being drunk with wine with being filled with the Spirit. Both strong drink and the Holy Spirit are means of addressing the overwhelmingness of life (the noise):

- Alcohol operates by making you less aware of your problems.
- The Holy Spirit operates by making you more aware of your ability to confront them.

**This applies to other drugs as well, such as phones.**

**Pastor's Challenge:**

**- Don't escape from your life, engage with it.**

**- What is one step you could take this week that would make your heroic self stronger? Take it.**