

# **Stop Being Worldly!**

Ephesians 4:17-32

*What does it mean to live the Spirit-filled life?* That is the question that we will be seeking to answer over the next three weeks.

## **Stop Being Worldly! (vs. 17-19)**

*<sup>17</sup> So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. <sup>18</sup> They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. <sup>19</sup> Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.*

How have the Gentiles lived? Paul describes this in a seven-fold way of walking, in verse 18-19.

- They are darkened in their understanding
- Separated from the life of God
- Their hearts are hardened
- They have lost all sensitivity
- They have given themselves over to sensuality
- They indulge in every kind of impurity
- They are full of greed

*Do you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit?* Then you cannot simultaneously feed in yourself a love for this world. The apostle John warned us regarding having a love for the things of this world:

*<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. <sup>16</sup> For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. <sup>17</sup> The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*

Related passages: Colossians 1:9-13; 1 John 2:15-17

## **But How Do I Stop? (vs. 20-24)**

*<sup>20</sup> That, however, is not the way of life you learned <sup>21</sup> when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup> You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup> to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Two key facets: Our volitional role (intentional effort) and God's grace and power.

### **I. Our Volitional Role in Sanctification – “Putting on and Putting Off”**

- A. Active role in the transformative process.
- B. Aligning our lives with God's will through the Holy Spirit.

C. "Walking by the Spirit" – a guided path to carry out transformation.

D. The conflict between the flesh and the Spirit

## II. God's Grace and Power in Redemption

A. Our salvation is a gift by grace, not by works.

B. We are God's handiwork, created in Christ for good works.

C. God's great love and mercy made us alive in Christ.

D. Created to be like God, in righteousness and holiness of truth.

## III. Tying God's Work and Our Work Together

A. Philippians 2:12-13 – Working out our salvation with God's work within us.

B. 1 Corinthians 5:7 – Already unleavened!

## IV. As the Body of Christ (v 25)

### **Practically Speaking, What's It Look Like? (vs. 25-32)**

Put off-Put on is a POWERFUL principle for growing in holiness. In short, we are not to simply STOP doing something (negative holiness) but we are to START doing something else (positive holiness).

In Ephesians 4:25-32 we see the following examples:

- PUT OFF falsehood. PUT ON truth-telling (vs. 25)
- PUT OFF sinful anger. PUT ON reconciliation (vs. 26-27)
- PUT OFF stealing. PUT ON hard work so that you might give to others, not take (vs. 28)
- PUT OFF harmful speech. PUT ON helpful speech (vs. 29)
- PUT OFF bitterness, rage, anger, etc. PUT ON compassion, patience, forgiveness, etc. (vs. 31)

<sup>30</sup>*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

### **Questions for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion:**

1. How does the concept of "putting off" the old self and "putting on" the new self resonate with your own journey as a follower of Christ?
2. How does understanding that our salvation is a gift from God, not based on our works, impact your perspective on carry out the command to "put off" and "put on"?
3. How do you think others perceive you based on the "uniform" you wear as a follower of Christ? Are there areas in your life where you may still be wearing the "old self" uniform, and how can you intentionally "put on" the characteristics of Christ in those areas?
4. What areas of your life need to Put Off? (think through patterns of thoughts, words, deeds)
5. What does holiness look like in these situations? (think negative and positive holiness)
6. Ask Jesus to share His life with you in those areas (Romans 13:14—"PUT ON the Lord Jesus Christ")