

Put Off & Put On (Part 2)

Text: Ephesians 4:29-32

Introduction:

1. This section (Vs. 25-32): The Apostle Paul now practically applies the “put off” and “put on” principle he has just discussed (Vs. 22-24) to the everyday lives of the believers. Some wrongly conclude that the Christian life is all about doctrine/theory and fails to impact one’s daily life. This couldn’t be further from the truth! The truth of God’s Word has a transforming effect on our entire lives.
2. A general pattern in these exhortations can be discerned. There is:
 - A negative aspect to the command – a behavior to put off.
 - A positive aspect to the command – a behavior to put on.
 - A reason for the command – the goal in view.
3. These exhortations touch at least 5 important areas in the believer’s life. We considered 3 of these in part 1 of this message and will now consider the final two. As new men in Christ we are to have:

I. A NEW TRUTHFULNESS (VS. 25)

II. A NEW TEMPER (VS. 26-27)

III. A NEW TRUSTWORTHINESS (Vs. 28)

IV. A NEW TONGUE (VS. 29-30)

A. What to Put Off (Vs. 29a)

1. “Let **no** corrupt communication” = the little word ‘no’ is very broad in its scope and holds the believer to a very high standard of speech.
2. “**corrupt** communication” = the word ‘corrupt’ means that which is putrid, rotting and worthless. It comes from the old man who is “corrupt” (Vs. 22). It was used in ancient literature to describe “rotten wood, withered flowers and rancid fish. It generally refers to things or people who are worn out or useless or that which is of little worth. In the New Testament it refers to worthless or withered trees that produce evil or worthless fruit (Matt. 7:17-19) and of bad or worthless fish (Matt. 13:48).” (Hoehner) So the word covers speech which is:
 - a. Unholy: Inuendoes, blue jokes, dirty jokes, deliberate double meanings, swear words, blasphemy, rough talk, toilet talk and idle gossip should never be heard coming from the lips of God’s children.
 - b. Unprofitable: The word not only covers speech which is defiling but speech which is ‘worthless’. A lot of time can be wasted on discussions around things which simply do not profit.

B. What to Put On (Vs. 29b)

1. “but that which his good” = that which is morally excellent, virtuous, of high quality. Interestingly the word ‘good’ is singular emphasizing that “every word is to be accounted for...any word that comes out of

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a believer's mouth should be good and not evil which causes injury." (Hoehner)

2. Col. 4:6 "Let your speech be always with **grace**, seasoned with **salt**, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

C. Why to Put On (Vs. 29c-30)

There are two important considerations when it comes to the use of our tongues. We need to consider:

1. Our relationship to the saints (Vs. 29c)
 - a. "the use" = the word use has the idea of "need, necessity". There is a need for the work of God to be built up.
 - b. 'edifying' = to build up. The word 'edifice' is a word related to 'edify' in English. Godly speech builds up the believers. Conversely, corrupt speech tears them down.
 - c. "minister grace" = "here it refers to the spiritual blessings and benefits that will accrue to the hearers from the gracious words of the speaker." (Wuest)
 - d. Challenge: Do people go away from a conversation with you helped or hindered in their Christian walk? Are they refreshed or discouraged?
2. Our relationship to the Spirit (Vs. 30)

Polluted speech not only damages the saints, it grieves the Spirit.

 - a. "**And** grieve not" = the word 'and' shows that this is closely connected with the previous exhortation. It is the "first time the 'kai' (and) conjunction is used in this section and suggests that it is not an entirely new injunction but is to be added to the last exhortation." (Hoehner) "The utterance of evil or worthless words is repugnant to the holiness of the Spirit, and is to be refrained from as calculated to grieve Him." (Wuest)
 - b. "grieve not the holy Spirit of God" = the word 'grieve' means to cause sorrow, to affect with sadness, cause grief. The same Greek word is translated "exceeding sorry" (Matt. 17:23), "very sorry" (Matt. 18:31), "cause grief" (2 Cor. 2:5) and 'heaviness' (1 Peter 1:6).
 - i. This clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is a Person and not some impersonal force like the cults try and teach. Only a person can be grieved.
 - ii. In many ways this verse is key in this section as it reveals how these different areas can affect our relationship to God's Spirit in our lives.
 - iii. Consider all of the ministries the Spirit of God performs in our lives such as comfort (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7); assurance (Rom. 8:16); teaching (John 16:13); producing godly fruit (Gal. 5:22-23); spiritual victory (Rom. 8:13) and power for witness (Acts 1:8). If the Spirit of God is grieved and quenched in my life, and is not at liberty to work as He desires, can you imagine what sort of devastating effect that will have on my Christian walk and experience?
 - iv. Challenge: How seriously do we take our relationship to God's Holy Spirit?

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- c. “whereby ye are sealed” = See 1:13-14. We were indwelt with and sealed by the Holy Spirit the moment we were saved.
- d. “until the day of redemption” = this sealing is a permanent thing. We are protected from the day of our salvation all the way through to the end. The future and final aspect of our redemption is in view here.

V. A NEW TENDERNESS (VS. 31-32)

A. What to Put Off (Vs. 31)

1. Bitterness – “Let all bitterness”
 - a. The word ‘all’ applies to all the five nouns that follow.
 - b. The word ‘bitterness’ is derived from the adjective ‘pikros’ that is used of a pointed or sharp arrow; hence it means to pierce, cut & prick. Bitter experiences often lead to a bitter spirit if the believer does not carefully guard his heart. It is like a gash or wound which if left untreated will become infected and spread septicemia through the body.
 - c. Hebrews 12:15 warns, “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”
 - d. Bitterness takes root in my life when I fail to appropriate the grace of God in hurtful situations.
 - e. Bitterness not only grieves the Holy Spirit in my own life and thereby damages my own walk with God (“troubles you”) it quickly poisons others and ‘defiles’ them.
 - f. Illustration of bitterness: Absalom’s bitterness against David
 - g. Illustration of a bitter experience, responded to by the grace of God - The story behind the hymn “It is Well with My Soul” by Horatio G. Spafford:

When the great Chicago fire consumed the Windy City in 1871, Horatio G. Spafford, an attorney heavily invested in real estate, lost a fortune. About that time, his only son, age 4, succumbed to scarlet fever. Horatio drowned his grief in work, pouring himself into rebuilding the city and assisting the 100,000 who had been left homeless.

In November of 1873, he decided to take his wife and daughters to Europe. Horatio was close to D.L. Moody and Ira Sankey, and he wanted to visit their evangelistic meetings in England, then enjoy a vacation.

When an urgent matter detained Horatio in New York, he decided to send his wife, Anna, and their four daughters, Maggie, Tanetta, Annie, and Bessie, on ahead. As he saw them settled into a cabin aboard the luxurious French liner Ville du Havre, unease filled his mind, and he moved them to a room closer to the bow of the ship. Then he said good-bye, promising to join them soon.

During the small hours of November 22, 1873, as the Ville du Havre, glided over smooth seas, the passengers were jolted from their bunks. The ship had collided with an iron sailing vessel, and water poured in like Niagara. The Ville du Havre tilted dangerously. Screams, prayers, and oaths merged into a nightmare of unmeasured terror. Passengers clung to posts, tumbled through darkness, and were swept away by powerful currents of icy ocean. Loved ones fell from each other’s grasp and disappeared into foaming blackness. Within two hours, the mighty ship vanished beneath the waters. The 226 fatalities included Maggie, Tanetta, Annie and Bessie. Mrs Spafford was found nearly unconscious, clinging to a piece of the wreckage. When the 47 survivors landed in Cardiff, Wales, she cabled her husband: “Saved Alone.”

Horatio immediately booked passage to join his wife, En route, on a cold December night, the captain called him aside and said, “I believe we are now passing over the place where the Ville du Havre went down.” Spafford went to his cabin but found it hard to sleep. He said to himself, “It is well; the will of God be done.” He later wrote his famous hymn based on those words.

2. Anger – “all...wrath and anger”

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- a. The two words are synonyms with a possible slight shade of difference between the two. The word 'wrath' has been defined as "the outward expression of anger, the quick boiling up of anger whereas 'anger' has been defined as a deep flowing anger, the attitude of anger. "The word 'thumos' was more passionate and temporary, that is, anger that boils up, whereas 'orge' was more settled and abiding, a state of anger." (Hoehner)
 - b. Note: These two words cover both types of anger. 1. The anger that smoulders away in the heart unseen. 2. The anger that boils up quickly and is expressed in violent words and actions.
 - c. Ecc. 7:0 "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools."
3. Clamour – "all...clamour"
- a. 'clamour' (κραυγή) = outcry, shouting; the cry of strife; expression of dissatisfaction; noise. It refers to repeated and urgent complaining. "The violent assertion of rights & wrongs, real or supposed." (Moule) Wuest defines it as "the outcry of passion, the outward manifestation of anger in vociferation or brawling."
 - b. Translated elsewhere as 'cry' such as:
 - i. Matthew 25:6 "And at midnight there was a **cry** (κραυγή) made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him."
 - ii. Acts 23:9 "And there arose a great **cry**: (κραυγή) and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God."
 - c. Examples of clamour – asserting my opinions/rights (i.e., making a protest when I don't get my way in church decision making); complaining and murmuring; creating a spirit of division and dissent etc... Prov. 6:16-19 "...he that **soweth** discord (strife) among brethren."
4. Evil speaking
- a. Comes from the Greek word βλασφημία. The word is translated elsewhere as Translated elsewhere as 'reviled', 'railed', "evil spoken of" & "to speak evil of". Satan is the master slanderer. Interestingly the word 'slanderer' in the N.T. (1 Tim. 3:11) comes from the same root word translated 'devil'.
 - b. Refers to slanderous and injurious speech against both God and man.
 1. Toward God – E.g., Using His Name flippantly or Misrepresenting His character (slander).
 2. Toward Man. It is probably this point that is most in focus. Examples would be railing on someone with hurtful words or assassinating someone else's character (slander).
 - c. **Take note** of how many of these exhortations have to do with the tongue (See Vs. 25, 29, 31).
5. Malice

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- a. Comes from a broad word meaning 'badness'. Webster defines 'malice as "Extreme enmity of heart, or malevolence; a disposition to injure others without cause, from mere personal gratification or from a spirit of revenge;"
- b. Malice in many ways is the fruit of a bitter, angry heart. Malice is where the attitude of bitterness and anger translates into action.

B. What to Put On (Vs. 32)

1. Kindness – kind as opposed to the harsh, hard, bitter and sharp spirit described in the previous verse.
2. Gentleness – the word 'tenderhearted' means 'compassionate'. The word originally was used to refer to the inward parts (e.g., the heart, lungs, liver & kidneys) and therefore came to speak of the seat of the emotions.
3. Forgiveness – the word has the idea of "showing grace". The word teaches that forgiveness involves bestowing something unmerited. A gracious, forgiving spirit is the opposite to the bitterness, anger, wrath, clamour, slander and malice described in the previous verse. We are held to the highest standard of forgiveness possible – "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Conclusion:

1. Is there something for you to remove (put off) out of your Christian life? Habits of deceit, dishonesty & theft? What about anger? How is our relationship to the Holy Spirit? Are we grieving Him in our words, thoughts, attitudes and actions?
2. Is there something you need to put on? Perhaps you have spent time working on removing the bad habits but are you cultivating godly habits in their place?