

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

COLOSSIANS 3:5-11

# DESIGNER LABEL CHRISTIANITY



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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MAY 17, 2020 (AM)

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# INTRODUCTION

## Problem

The top ten luxury designer labels in 2019 were names like Louis Vuitton, Hermes, Rolex, Tiffany, Christian Dior, Armani, and Prada. Younger people favored labels like Nike, Hollister, Vans, Champion, Forever 21, H&M, American Eagle, Aeropostale, Adidas, and Diesel.

Why is it that such designer label brands have such pull and popularity? If you look at the advertising, it's clear that the brands are associated with a certain lifestyle. If you wear a certain t-shirt or jacket or shoe, it immediately catapults you into a certain social status and way of living.

If we look at the wearers, it's obvious that the advertising has been incredibly effective. People adopt a certain identity when they put these clothes on. It changes the way they view themselves, their posture, demeanor, and even the way they walk and talk.

**Designer labels define identity and determine lifestyle.**

Spiritually, there are only two designer brands: "Old You" and "New You." I say designer brands because each has a designer, as we'll see. Like all designer labels these spiritual brands also define our identity and determine our lifestyle. They decide who we are and what we do.

## Solution?

I want you to see the connection between your label and your life, and persuade you to change labels from "Old You" to "New You" if you haven't already, or live up to the "New You" label if you've changed your label but not yet your life. This change of designer label is the language Paul uses in Colossians 3:5-11, especially in verses 8 & 10, where he commanded the Colossians to "put off" the "Old You" label and lifestyle, and put on the "New You" label and lifestyle.

## CONTEXT

In chapter three, Paul transitioned from the deeply theological to the highly practical. As Kent Hughes put it: "For Paul, doctrine demands duty, creed determines conduct, facts demand acts." In chapter 3:1-4, he lifted us into the heavenly heights, and now returns us to earth with a thud! We've connected with our life in heaven, hidden in Christ, and now we return to earth to battle against sin and death.



**What's the first step in that battle?  
Rip off your old label.**



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# 1. THE "OLD YOU" LABEL IS DEAD (5-9)

"You died" Paul asserted (3:3 & 2:20). Therefore, "put to death your members which are on earth" (3:5). You died....therefore put to death. You died with Christ...therefore kill everything in you that killed Christ. You died to sin with Christ in the past....therefore kill sin in the present. You died with Christ to sin's penalty....therefore with Christ kill sin's power. Paul then puts a target on certain types of sin.

## Kill sexual sins

***"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them" (5-7).***

"Put to death" is strong language. It means kill sin, murder it, execute it, slay it, get rid of it, bury it, and turn it to dust. This is a fight to the death. As John Owen said, "Kill sin or it will kill you." This is not a sparring match, this is not shadow-boxing, this isn't even UFC. A knockout is not enough. You have to kill or you will be killed.

Although Paul says we are to kill the members which are used to commit sexual sin, his following words make clear that he does not mean a physical murder, but a spiritual murder. It's the thoughts and desires that are to be killed, the fuel and force behind the members. "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you..." (ESV). The earth or world is the creator and designer behind these passions.

- **Immorality:** "Porneia" from which we get the word "porn." All sexual activity outside marriage.
- **Impurity:** Moral uncleanness including immoral imagination and speech
- **Passion:** Lust
- **Evil desires:** Perhaps goes further than lust into perverse desires.

The Bible is not negative about sex, it is negative about the misuse of it. God gave sex for enjoyment within marriage alone and is to be guarded and reserved for this. This is not to minimize pleasure but to maximize it. Having died with Christ, the first thing you are to do is destroy any and all spoiling of sex.

I remember hearing of a special forces soldier who said that the hardest part of the job wasn't the terrible training but having to kill someone in cold blood without a second's pause. This he said was what made the special forces "special." Paul is looking for special forces. He's looking for killers of sin.

## Kill money sins

***...put to death...covetousness (greed), which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.***

Again, it's not "stop this, or cover this up, or weaken this." It's "Kill." We need a killer instinct. Money sins follow sexual sins because they both involve uncontrolled desires for pleasures and possessions that are not ours. Covetousness is the same basic desire as sexual sins. "Often when sensuality loses its hold, materialism takes its place. This is why many middle-aged men who were once devoted to sensuality are now equally given to money. These sins have the same source" (Kent Hughes). Paul called this idolatry because it puts our thoughts and desire where God ought to be. This kind of killing is therefore "mercy-killing" in the best sense. It is a mercy to us.



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## Put off verbal sins

***"But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another..." (8-9a).***

Paul changes the illustration here from murdering to putting off, or unclothing. The Message paraphrase of this verse reads: "It wasn't long ago that you were doing all that stuff and not knowing any better. But you know better now, so make sure it's all gone for good: bad temper, irritability, meanness, profanity, dirty talk." Although many of these sins have outward expression, the root sin of these verbal sins is "malice" or "meanness." If you want to stop slandering, gossiping, rage, abuse, stealing someone's character, you need to deal with malice in the heart. The inability to rejoice in anything good in someone else and the desire to tarnish and smear everyone else around you.

## Put off the old you

***"Since you have put off the old man with his deeds" (9)***

He says put off these sins as belonging to the "Old You" label. You put that off when you came to faith. So, why are you putting on some of its clothes and accessories again. The *Message* captures the idea well: "You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire." Say of these old clothes, "I wouldn't be seen dead in these."

## APPLICATION

Julie was raised in a middle-class home. Her family wasn't poor, but they weren't able to buy the latest clothes and shoes. Perhaps at Christmas she would get Adidas running shoes, or a pair of Levis, but most of the time it was Walmart's and Meijer's best. She was popular with her friends, who were very similar to her, but she always looked jealously at the girls who had designer outfits.

When she was sixteen, Julie got a part-time job and started to earn up to \$100 a week. Every Friday when she was paid, she would go straight to the mall to buy something, anything with a label on it. The kids she previously envied started paying attention to her and complimenting her. They asked her to hang out with them. Slowly she drifted away from her old friends and spent most of the time with the designer label group.

She soon discovered the designer label friends were all about attracting the guys and looking down on everyone else. They would laugh at Julie's old friends' clothes. Julie resisted at first but gradually adopted provocative clothes, words, looks, and looking down on others and laughing at them. Her life was a mix of money sins, sexual sins, and verbal sins. As her labels changed, so did the way she thought about others, viewed others, and acted towards others.

Do you see how our labels shape the way we look at ourselves and others, and how they influence the way we live?

PUT OFF THE "OLD YOU" LABEL  
OR YOU'LL LIVE THE "OLD YOU" SINS.



Is it all negative? Put this to death. Put this off. Anything positive?  
Yes, there is hope of new you too!



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## 2. THE "NEW YOU" LABEL IS ALIVE (10-11)

Paul's argument is similar here. You lived with Christ (2:13; 3:3,4), therefore live. You were resurrected with Christ, therefore live a resurrected life. You rose again with new life in Christ, therefore live a new life for Christ. You have new life, therefore wear new clothes. Holiness is halved if we are only putting off. We must also put on.

### The new you has a new image

***"and have put on the new man who is renewed according to the image of him who created him" (10a).***

You stripped off the old you, the you governed by sin, and you've put on the new you, the you governed by Christ. The "New You" must be constantly renewed. You have a new dresser, a new wardrobe consultant, the Designer who wants to see his image, his brand upon you. As *The Message* puts it: "Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it."

### The new you has a new knowledge

***"...who is renewed in knowledge" (10b)***

The "New You" label isn't just a different look; it's a different way of thinking about everything.

### The new you has a new view

***"...where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all" (11)***

The "Old You" label was very divisive. It was always erecting barriers between people based upon their color, their country, their background, their wealth, their status. "The "New You" label replaces barriers with bridges and divisions with unity. It gets rid of racial barriers, cultural barriers, social barriers, economic barriers, educational barriers. All these things mean nothing now. All Christians stand on the same level before God.

Now you view all Christians as Christians. Christ is all and in all. Christ is all that matters and is in all that matters. Christ is everything and is in everything. The more we put on the "New You" label the less divisive and the more united we become.

## APPLICATION

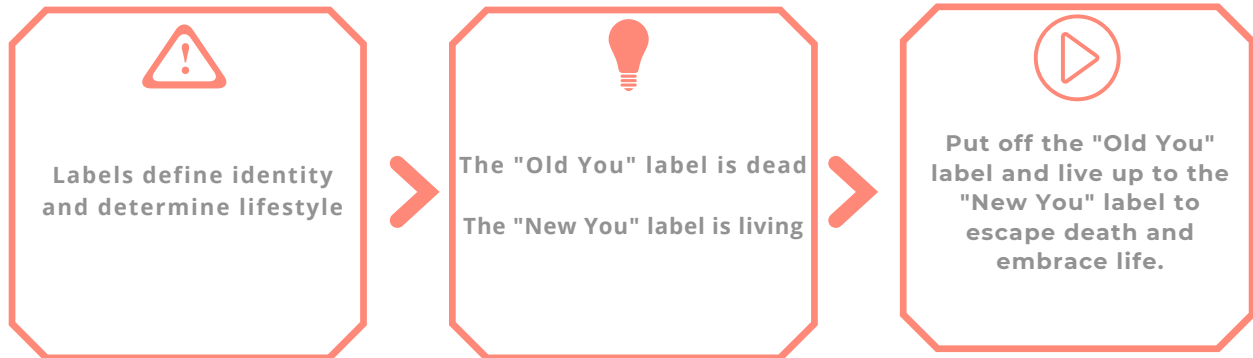
Remember Julie? One day she lost her job. The economy tanked and she couldn't get a replacement. As the weeks passed her designer friends noticed that she didn't have the latest fashions and that she was wearing things that were beginning to look faded and shabby. They didn't really want to be seen with her any more and drifted away from her.

Julie started to hate who she had become and one day went home and took all her fancy clothes, put them in a bag, and brought them to Plato's closet. She didn't get that much for them, but with her money, she stopped off at Meijers and Walmart on the way home and bought some new unbranded clothes. She stopped dividing people up based upon what they wore. She became happy again and her old friends noticed the change. She asked them to forgive her, which they did. She thanked God that night for the lesson she learned about how labels are linked to identify and influence lifestyle.

PUT ON THE "NEW YOU" LABEL  
IF YOU WANT A "NEW YOU" LIFESTYLE.



# CONCLUSION



**PRAYER:** Heavenly Designer, take off my old earthly label and lifestyle and clothe me with the new heavenly label and lifestyle.

## FURTHER STUDY

### Online Articles

- [How to Kill Sin](#) by Sinclair Ferguson
- [The Anatomy of Holiness](#) by Kevin DeYoung
- [A Primer on Mortification of Sin](#) by Erik Raymond
- [Killing Sin Through Personal Prayer](#) (J I Packer video)

### Books

- [How does sanctification work?](#) by David Powlison
- [Overcoming Sin and Temptation](#) by John Owen (an updated and modernized version of Owen's *Mortification of Sin*.)

### Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do your clothes and labels change you?
2. How can you increase your "killer instinct" when it comes to sin?
3. How can the church present its view of sex more positively and argue against immorality more winsomely?
4. In what ways does Julie's story help you to put off the "Old You"?
5. How does the "New You" label change the way you think and the way you view others.
6. In what ways does Julie's story help you put on the "New You"?

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COLOSSIANS 3:5-11

# DESIGNER LABEL CHRISTIANITY

YOU'RE DONE WITH THAT OLD LIFE. IT'S LIKE A FILTHY SET OF ILL-FITTING CLOTHES YOU'VE STRIPPED OFF AND PUT IN THE FIRE. NOW YOU'RE DRESSED IN A NEW WARDROBE. EVERY ITEM OF YOUR NEW WAY OF LIFE IS CUSTOM-MADE BY THE CREATOR, WITH HIS LABEL ON IT. ALL THE OLD FASHIONS ARE NOW OBSOLETE...FROM NOW ON EVERYONE IS DEFINED BY CHRIST. EVERYONE IS INCLUDED IN CHRIST.

KENT HUGHES



Labels define identity  
and determine lifestyle

### Biblical answer?



The "Old You" label is dead

- Kill sexual sins
- Kill money sins
- Put off verbal sins
- Put off the old you

PUT OFF THE "OLD YOU" LABEL  
OR YOU'LL LIVE THE "OLD YOU" SINS.

Anything positive?



Put off the "Old You"  
label and live up to the  
"New You" label  
to escape death and  
embrace life.



The "New You" label is living

- New you has a new image
- New you has a new knowledge
- New you has a new view

PUT ON THE "NEW YOU" LABEL  
FOR A "NEW YOU" LIFESTYLE

Action?

**PRAYER**  
HEAVENLY DESIGNER, TAKE  
OFF MY OLD EARTHLY LABEL  
AND LIFESTYLE AND CLOTHE  
ME WITH THE NEW  
HEAVENLY LABEL AND  
LIFESTYLE.

