

PUT OFF AND PUT ON

Wish you were different? Wonder why it seems so hard to live the Christian life? It's all about the warfare of the flesh versus the spirit. Before you become a believer in Jesus Christ, the Bible says you are "*dead IN sins.*" But if you are a believer, having received Jesus as Lord and Savior, the Bible says you are now "*dead TO sins.*" Crucified with Christ and raised up with Him. Big difference!

1- Perceiving the real you. A believer lives in a body of flesh, but your real life is in "*union with Christ.*" By
2- Placing your daily life in proper perspective, it all makes sense. Colossians 3 says "*set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*" Because the real you relates to heaven, not earth. You are at war with the flesh because you are raised up with Christ. The Bible puts it in practical terms.

3. Putting OFF the old you. The real you, reborn in Christ, is spiritually alive to God and dead to sin. So the Bible instructs you to discard the old things of the flesh. Even if you aren't aware of the battle, your new spirit wants to obey God, while your old flesh does not. God's truth, the Bible, tells you how to live.

Colossians 3:5 says, "*put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*" Just a click away. A thought, a glance, and off you go. But now, alive in Christ, you can refuse to compromise with sin. Put it to death. It must no longer define your manner of life. "*Put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices.*"

When you are immature, the operative word is no no no. You want to do as you please. But when you are in Christ, you now have the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to say no to sin and yes to God. The real you relates to your new spirit, not your old flesh. You are no longer enslaved to sinful desires. Yes, their presence and influence will tempt you, but you are free from their power - by the Holy Spirit's power.

The old saying is "*since we still have combustible materials about us, we must put out the fire.*" How can you grow as a Christian if you are regularly fueling the fires of your sinful desires? Put away those things. Get rid of them from your life. Put off, put away, put to death the old things of the flesh. It's not you.

4. Putting ON the new you. Colossians 3:9 says "*you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*" New life in Christ is all about the power of the Holy Spirit. Verse 12 says, "*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*"

Does this describe you? Do you wish it did? It's the fruit of the Spirit. You can counterfeit some of this in the flesh, but you will always fail, apart from the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22 says, "*walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh*" but instead you will bear His fruit, in obedience to His power.

Colossians 3:15 says, "*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.*" This means you and all others in union with Christ. The koinonia of the whole church family. "*And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*" That's the new you in Christ. If you can't even do this in church on Sundays, what's the rest of your week like?

Your life is warfare. Your enemy is your own flesh. Your resources are God's truth and His power. Your strategies are trust and obey. That's how you are transformed. "*And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*" Its a powerful principle for practical Christian living. Perceive your real identity in union with Christ. Put off the old things of the flesh. Put on the new things of the spirit. In obedience to God, all by the power of the Holy Spirit.