

## Vivification - Putting on Christ

If we have killed sin in our hearts and minds we have only come halfway in the process of image bearing. This is because in becoming like Christ, we not only have to **put off** the **old nature** and the **sins** that accompany it, but we must also **replace** it with the important **virtues** of the **new nature** by **putting on God's virtue**. It is one thing not to be sinful, it is another thing to be like Christ. We may not hate our neighbor, but do we actually, and actively love him? The New Testament **calls us** to a **lively life of virtue** by telling us to **put on virtue** as if it were our clothing. So often when the Bible instructs us to put off or to kill sin, it also tells us in the same context to put on virtue. See how the **vice of sin is contrasted** with the **virtue** of the **person of Christ**, which is called here, **“the armor of light.”**

**Romans 13:11-14** - 11 And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; **for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.** 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. **Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.** 13 Let us **behave properly as in the day**, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 **But put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. NASB

Here again in Ephesians 4, the **“put off”** and **“put on”** pattern, combined with the **renewing of the mind** is the **pattern for a life of holiness and image bearing.**

**Ephesians 4:20-24** -20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, **you lay aside the old self**, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be **renewed in the spirit of your mind**, 24 and **put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.** NASB

Paul says, **“lay aside the old self,”** and be **“renewed in the spirit of your mind.”** Once, sin is dead, there remains the need for virtue to live, so he adds, **“put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”** Put off your sins, and correct your thinking according to the **new creature** that God has already created you to be, and therefore **act and live** as that **new creation.**

**2 Corinthians 5:17** - 17 Therefore **if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature;** the **old things passed away; behold, new things have come.** NASB

See the pattern of the new and supernatural life of the Christian. The **old things of sin and self** have **already passed away**, and now we are **new creations in Christ.** Sin no longer rules or dominates us, we have been freed from its controlling power, and now the power and presence of the Holy Spirit is with us to give us victory as we walk by faith (God dependent effort). And it is not just some spiritual and esoteric idea, but affects the way we behave and the way we live our lives. It affects the bad deeds we are to put away and the good deeds we are to put on. And all of this happens because inside the heart and soul, we have been supernaturally transformed by God in regeneration. We **“are being renewed”** says Paul, **“according to the image of the One who created him.”** The **Spirit is powerfully renewing us and empowering us** to live a life of virtue and become imitators of God.

**Colossians 3:9-10** - 9 Do not lie to one another, since **you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,** 10 and **have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him** NASB

**Ephesians 4:31-5:2** - 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander **be put away from you**, along with all malice. 32 And **be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.** 5:1 Therefore **be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love**, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. NASB

And so we are called in so many places in the New Testament to **put on virtue**. There are many **imperatives** in the Apostolic writings calling us to lives of **godly character, good deeds, and virtue**. These are said not only to be the fruits of the Spirit within us (because God is the primary worker in our holiness), but **our active role** in seeing our sanctification coming to completion. The **Gospel** promises of forgiveness and cleansing of sin, and justification before God and the son-ship of adoption and heavenly inheritance, also heartily accompany a **non-optional imperative call to holiness of life and a transformed life of separation from sin and the pursuit of virtue and good deeds**.

**Matthew 5:16** - 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that **they may see your good works**, and **glorify your Father** who is in heaven. NASB

**Colossians 3:12-16** - 12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience**; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 And **beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity**. 15 And let the **peace of Christ rule in your hearts**, to which indeed you were called in one body; and **be thankful**. 16 Let the **word of Christ richly dwell within you**, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. NASB

**Titus 2:11-14** - 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 **instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly** in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, **zealous for good deeds**. NASB

**Titus 3:8,14** - 8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that **those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds**. These things are good and profitable for men.... 14 And **let our people also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, that they may not be unfruitful**. NASB

**Hebrews 10:23-25** - 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and **let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds**, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. NASB

**1 Peter 2:12** - 12 **Keep your behavior excellent** among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may **on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God** in the day of visitation. NASB

Let us consider then that we are to **pursue this life of virtue**, of love and good deeds, having our **hearts and minds fixed** on this pursuit, for it is God's purpose in our salvation to make us like Him and to conform us into the image of Christ. Since God is working to make us like Christ, our role and response is to **obey His call** to both **mortify sin** and to **put on His royal robe of virtue** in our daily life. We are to work this salvation out, and allow it to come to fruition by the power and presence of God, as we both fix our eyes upon the Word to renew the mind, and pursue, **actively chase after and lay hold of His virtue**.

**Philippians 2:12-13** - 12 So then, my beloved, just as **you have always obeyed**, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling; 13 **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure**. NASB

**Colossians 3:1-2** - 1 If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth**. NASB

**Philippians 4:8** - 8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **let your mind dwell on these things**. NASB

We must be diligent in this pursuit, for God is at work in you through the Word and by the Spirit.

**2 Peter 1:5-7** - 5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence**, in your faith supply **moral excellence**, and in your moral excellence, **knowledge**; 6 and in your knowledge, **self-control**, and in your