

“THE ‘OLD MAN’ IS GONE!”

COLOSSIANS 3:8-11

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

Young people: You should never call your father “the Old Man”! That is rude and disrespectful!

Besides, do you even know who the “Old Man” is? It is not your father!

If you are born again, you used to have “the Old Man”; but now he is gone and you are a “New Man.”

The main point that I want you to understand today is that you no longer have the “Old Man.” He is gone, once and forever! You are a New Man, a new creation in Christ Jesus. You can’t go back—stop trying! Live like who you are!

YOU MUST LIVE LIKE THE NEW MAN THAT YOU REALLY ARE IN CHRIST!

I. SINS THAT YOU MUST PUT OFF/LAY ASIDE

- Like an old, worn out, useless garment, or one that no longer fits.
- V. 5 listed some vile sins that we must “put to death”, including sexual sins of various kinds, along with uncleanness of all sorts, controlling passions, evil desires, and greed/covetousness that amounts to idolatry.
- On account of such things God judges the world and its sinners (6).
- Believers **used to be** part of that lifestyle.
- **“But now YOU YOURSELVES**—you also and especially—must put off all such things, along with the list Paul now gives.
- The sins that follow are first internal attitudes and emotions that eventually manifest themselves outwardly— especially in speech.
- These sins affect interpersonal relationships.
- Lay them aside—once and for all (aorist tense).
- See other similar statements: **Rom. 13:12-14; Hebrews 12:1; Jas. 1:21; I Pet. 2:1.**
- **DO YOU THINK THAT GOD WANTS TO MAKE HIMSELF CLEAR ABOUT THIS? ARE THESE SINS SERIOUS OR WHAT?**

A. Anger: Some think that this term speaks of the settled feeling of anger.

B. Wrath: Some think that this term speaks of the sudden and passionate outburst of that feeling.

- But some reverse the two.
- In fact, the LXX seems to use them as synonyms, and so does the NT generally.
- The two are often combined to mean “fierce anger/wrath” such as Rev. 16:19; 19:15.

C. Malice: This sin involves a deep seated ill will toward another person; it is has a vicious nature which is bent on doing harm to others.

D. Slander (blasphemy)

- The term when directed toward God or sacred things does mean “blasphemy.”
- More commonly it is directed toward people and speaks of slander, evil speaking—as here.
- It involves the attempt to belittle someone and cause someone to fall into disrepute, or to receive a bad reputation.

E. Filthy/dirty/abusive talk; this term has two primary definitions.

- The primary definition is filthy/dirty talk.
- Abusive speech arises from the former; the emphasis here is on abusive speech.
- Some would combine the two ideas with such an expression as **“foul-mouthed abuse.”**

1. Such must be put “out of your mouth.” Especially with reference to the last two sins that are clearly spoken, but not excluding the first 3 that often become outwardly visible.

2. Then Paul begins a new sentence and adds one more sin especially egregious and extremely common—lying.
- F. Lying—Jesus is the “truth” (Jn. 14:6); believers have heard and accepted “the word of truth” (1:5); the devil is a liar and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44).
- Lying is a sin that the majority of Christian practices on a regular basis.
 - We live in a deceitful and dishonest culture.
 - Most think that “little white lies” are OK.
 - Most think that lying for a good cause is acceptable. This is not what God says!
1. Do not be lying—as a practice; and if you have been doing so—“Stop Lying!”
 2. Especially as Christians, don’t lie one to another.
 - The foundation of communication among believers must be truth!
 - This requirement does not in any way justify or permit lying to the unsaved world.
 - Of course, the “lies” of false teachers must be included.
 - **Remember, Satan is a liar and deceiver.**

II. THE REASON THAT THESE SINS MUST BE LAID ASIDE (cf. Eph. 4:22-24)

- A. You have put off/laid aside the Old Man—literally **stripped off; a very strong word** (“having stripped clean off”) used elsewhere only in 2:15 of Christ “stripping off, laying aside, disarming” the wicked angelic rulers and authorities.
1. Identification of the “Old Man.

The old man is the unregenerate person in his entirety outside of Christ—it is man as in Adam. This person has ceased to exist when the believer became regenerate; the one who trusted Christ effectively “put him off,” crucified him (Rom. 6:6). See Eph. 4:22 for this same figure. Now the Christian is “a new man” as v. 10 goes on to say—he is in Christ; note that putting on the new man is the same as putting on Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 13:14). We must not speak in terms of natures, as though the believer has put off the old nature and has now put on a new one. **Rather, he has put off his “Adamic’ identification, with its servitude to sin” and he has put on his “Christic’ identification, with its power over sin” (M. p. 268).** We exist in a new realm; the old Adam no longer dictates to us; Christ does. A decisive break has taken place, and *sin and death no longer reign over us* (Rom. 6:6; Col. 3:9-10). Hendricksen quotes Thomas Goodwin to the effect that “there are but two men that are seen standing before God, Adam and Jesus Christ; and these two men have all other men hanging at their belts” (see Rom. 5:12-21; I Cor. 15:22, 45-49; p. 150).

2. The “practices” [“evil” is implied in the word] of the old man have also been set aside.

- B. You have “put on” the “New Man/self.”—once and for all!

This new self is continually being renewed. The Christian life is not static; we should be getting “newer” every day. The fact of our renewal “does not mean that we cannot yet be influenced by Adam’s pattern of behavior. For while transferred into Christ’s realm, we are still prone to think and live as people who still belong to Adam’s realm.” Therefore, we have a constant need to appropriate the change that has occurred (cf. Eph. 4:22-24). The old realm is identified with sin and death; the new realm with righteousness and life due to Christ’s death and resurrection. In our new realm we are empowered by God to live in victory, and we also are required to live in accord to the reality of our new situation. This is why Paul next states that the “practices” of the old man must be rejected (9b), while the practices of the new man must be “put on” (vv. 12-17). As often in Paul’s teaching, we see reflected his “‘already-not yet’ tension.” We already are detached from the “old man,” and attached to the “new man,” but the characteristics identified with this old man are not all defeated and destroyed. As Moo asserts, “The old realm continues to exist and to exercise its influence over us who still live in unredeemed bodies” (p. 268.).

1. The focus of the renewal—its direction or sphere—is “knowledge.”
 - This speaks of the true knowledge of God and Scripture and spiritual realities that become manifest in practical Christian living.

- Notice that man lost true knowledge when he believed the tempter's lie.
 - Note the emphasis in Rom. 1:18-25, esp. v. 18 "suppress the truth in unrighteousness, and v. 25 "they exchanged the truth of God for a lie." See v. 22: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools", and v. 21—"their foolish heart was darkened." Also v. 28 "a depraved mind." **Note that the sins of Rom. 1 are mainly the same ones as listed here in Col.**
2. The Renewal is according to the image of its Creator.
- I don't think it is necessary to argue the point as to whether God the Father is the one spoken of here (since allusion is to Gen. 1:26, 28 in the original creation, and the term "create" generally has reference to His activities) or God the Son is the Creator since Paul has made a big point about that in 1:15-16, in the same context where He is said to be "the image of the invisible God." Both are true, and both Persons are involved!
 - Man was made in the image of God in Gen. 1:26, 28; but that image was ruined in the Fall in the Garden of Eden.
 - In Regeneration and Sanctification we are "renewed" in that image.

Next week we focus on v. 11 and the **Corporate Image** of believers and how that plays out.

Also, vv. 12-17 **focus on the qualities of the New Man that ought to be evident in the believer's life.**

CONCLUSION

This theological point I have made here is very important; most believers either miss it completely, or have a poor understanding of it.

- We often hear teachers say: "Put off the Old Man." Well you can't do that—it has already been done!
- We often confuse the "old man" "new man" with two different natures, the old sinful nature and the new nature since becoming saved. "The Old man" is not a nature nor is the new man a nature.
- Then we sometimes speak as though we have two natures, as though we are two different people. Are we schizophrenic or what?
- The key is to submit to the indwelling Spirit so that He may have control of our entire being so that the "new creation" that we already are in Christ Jesus can be consistently manifested in our lives.
- Yes, we still are "flesh" and have inherent weakness due to our sinful depravity; we will struggle with that all our days until we are finally transformed totally into his likeness at the Second Coming of Christ when we also receive our glorified bodies (I Jn. 3:2).

YOU MUST LIVE LIKE THE NEW MAN THAT YOU REALLY ARE IN CHRIST!