



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 66

PUTTING OFF THE OLD SELF

Christians should imitate Christ in all they do.



MONDAY

THE STORY: EPHESIANS 4:20-24

Put off your old self. Paul tells the Ephesians to put off their old self (their sin) and to put on their new self. Each person who has been re-created by God has been recreated to be like Him in true righteousness and holiness. The power of sin has been broken, so we should strive to say “no” to sin and “yes” to righteousness. As Christians, we are called to live for Christ and not for ourselves or the unbelieving world around us.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What is the old self? (The old self is a way to describe people before the Holy Spirit entered their lives and broke the power of sin over them. Before God changes our hearts, we have only a sinful nature; we are slaves to sin, bound to live sinful lives.)

What is the new self? (The new self is our changed, new life in Christ. Jesus conquered sin so that we could be freed from the slavery of sin. Now that we are free, we have the ability to live like we are free, saying “no” to sin and “yes” to God.)

PRAY:

Ask the Lord to change each member of your family and help you put off the old self and put on the new self and live for Christ.

**TUESDAY****THE STORY: EPHESIANS 4:25-32**

Paul lists the “put off”s and “put on”s. Paul doesn’t leave any room for confusion for the Ephesians. After telling them to put off the old self and put on the new, Paul lists a number of areas so that they understand just what he is talking about. They need to put off falsehood and speak truth, and put off stealing and put on work. Paul is aware of the dangers of legalism, which is trying to earn favor with God, so he reminds them that their motivation is Christ. Each time Paul mentions Christ, he is reminding them and us of the cross and our salvation in Christ.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Where does Paul bring Christ into these two paragraphs? (Help your children see the connection to the cross but leave Ephesians 5:1 for tomorrow’s lesson.)

Why is it important to remember that our reason for obedience is found in what Christ has already done? (It is important that we remember that Jesus lived a perfect life and that His righteousness has been given to us. We could never make ourselves righteous by our works. As we battle sin and strive to live in a manner pleasing to God, it is with gratitude for what Jesus did. We are trying to be like Him. We are not trying to be good enough so as to earn God’s favor. We are trying to be good because we already have God’s favor. If we are trying to earn God’s favor, it is like saying that Christ’s perfect life and sacrifice were not good enough for us. It is not necessary to add our obedience to Christ’s obedience. His obedience satisfies God’s holy requirement without any help from us.)

PRAY:

Pray that each member of your family stays near the cross as you work to put off your old self and live for God.



**WEDNESDAY
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

THE STORY: EPHESIANS 5:1

Even though Paul challenged the Ephesians to live holy lives, putting off the old self, he never forgot the gospel of grace. Paul continually reminds the Ephesians that they are following Christ's obedience, not striking out on their own path. Notice that Christ willingly gave up His life for us. The men who crucified Jesus did not force death upon Him. Jesus could have called down angels in his defense.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why is it important to never forget the gospel when we talk about following God? (The gospel is how we are reconciled to God, not by our works. We obey out of the new life Jesus gave us; we do not obey to earn new life.)

What does it say was the reason Christ died for us? (Christ's love for us was His motivation.)

PRAY:

Thank Jesus for willingly dying on the cross for us.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: EPHESIANS 5:2-20

After repeating the gospel clearly in Ephesians 5:1, Paul goes after our remaining sin with a vengeance. There must not even be a hint of sin! Paul is aware of the way that sin works. It begins with a little compromise, then a little more, until the whole person is given over.

Paul tells us we should live as children of light. Again and again Paul reminds the Ephesians of the gospel as the foundation for good works that follow.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does it mean to live as children of the light? (Living as children of the light simply means we should follow God. He has changed us and placed His Holy Spirit in us. God is light, and all Christians have been brought into the kingdom of light as a result of believing in the work of Jesus on the cross. In the Bible, sin is portrayed as darkness. When we trust Christ and are born again, we are taken out of the world of darkness and sin; we are placed in the kingdom of light. So we should strive to live a life following Jesus.)

In what ways do you struggle most to live as children of the light? (Parents, take the lead in confessing your own struggles. Point out to your children that it is not possible to live for God unless you first submit to God by placing your trust in what Jesus has done. Remember, we do not obey to qualify for salvation; we obey because Jesus qualified for us. We do not obey to earn God's favor; we obey because we already have God's favor. We obey because we are saved, not to earn our salvation.)

PRAY:

Pray that each member of your family would confess their sins and submit to God believing the gospel and living as children of the light.



FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

THE STORY: PSALM 44:22

Paul quoted this passage in Psalms in Romans 8:36 to describe the persecution that comes to Christians as a result of following Christ. Jesus said, “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also” (John 15:20). Our persecution will be like His. Jesus was the sheep that was led to the slaughter (see Acts 8:32-34). Jesus was like a lamb that went silently without objection. Ephesians 5:1 tells us that Jesus went to the cross willingly out of love for us.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Do all Christians face death? (No, many Christians live in countries where there is no serious persecution. Even so, we all face ridicule for living righteous lives and saying no to sin. We will all face ridicule for sharing the gospel.)

How can the fear of man hinder us from following Christ? (We can be afraid of what people will say about us and as a result shy away from living for God or sharing the message of salvation with others. If there are Christians in persecuted countries willing to die for their faith, we should at least be willing to be ridiculed for ours.)

PRAY:

Ask God for the Holy Spirit to give us courage to live for Christ and proclaim our faith boldly.