

Expanded Report: Put Off the Old Self, Put On the New (Ephesians 4:17-32)

Prologue: Transformation in Christ

The living room was warm and inviting, filled with the soft light of a table lamp. The Presswood family had gathered for their evening devotional. Ariel sat cross-legged on the floor with her Bible open, her brow furrowed in thought. Alice was sprawled out beside her, clutching Mr. Fluffernutter, her beloved stuffed bunny, while Ryan flipped to Ephesians 4:17-32. Yaya and Poppy sat nearby, their calm presence a steadying force in the lively atmosphere.

Ryan began to read, his voice steady and clear. “This passage speaks about leaving behind the old self, the one tied to sin, and embracing the new self in Christ.”

Alice, always full of questions, leaned forward, her curls bouncing. “Is it like getting new clothes? Like when Mommy gives me a clean dress after playing in the mud?”

Yaya chuckled softly. “Yes, sweetheart, it’s just like that. But instead of clothes, it’s about our hearts and actions—choosing kindness, truth, and love over anger and selfishness.”

Ariel’s eyes lit up as she traced the verses with her finger. “So, it’s like becoming more like Jesus?”

“Exactly,” Ryan replied. “It’s about being renewed in the spirit of our minds and putting on the new self, created to be like God in righteousness and holiness.”

The family settled into a deeper discussion, captivated by the challenge and beauty of transformation.

Paul’s Contrast: Old Self vs. New Self

In **Ephesians 4:17-22**, Paul paints a vivid picture of the old self—marked by sin, ignorance, and a hardened heart—and the new self, characterized by righteousness and true holiness.

1. The Old Self:

- Paul describes the old self as alienated from the life of God due to ignorance and the hardening of hearts. This life is dominated by greed, impurity, and deceitful desires.
- Yaya elaborated, “The old self is like walking in darkness. You can’t see the truth, and you stumble over the same sins repeatedly.”

2. The New Self:

- Paul calls believers to “put on the new self,” created to reflect God’s image in righteousness and holiness.
- “It’s not just about stopping bad habits,” Ryan explained. “It’s about letting God transform us completely, from our thoughts to our actions.”

Ariel nodded thoughtfully. “So, it’s like switching teams—from playing for ourselves to playing for Jesus.”

Key Teachings for Living as the New Self

Paul's instructions in Ephesians 4:25-32 provide practical steps for believers to live out this transformation. Each command builds a picture of what it means to reflect Christ in daily life.

1. Speak Truth

- **Ephesians 4:25:** "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another."
- Ryan emphasized, "Honesty is foundational to trust. As members of the same body, lying hurts everyone."

Ariel chimed in, "It's like being on a sports team. If someone lies about their position, the whole team struggles."

2. Control Anger

- Paul acknowledges anger but warns against sinning in response to it:
Ephesians 4:26: "Be angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath."
- Ryan explained, "Anger is natural, but it can become destructive if we don't handle it with grace. Paul tells us to resolve our anger quickly, so it doesn't fester."

Alice asked, "What if you're really, really mad?" Yaya replied gently, "That's when you pray and ask Jesus to help you forgive."

3. Avoid Sinful Habits

- Paul warns against stealing and corrupt speech, urging believers to work hard and speak words that build others up:
Ephesians 4:28-29: "Let him that stole steal no more... Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying."
- Ariel reflected, "This reminds me to think before I speak. Words can either hurt or help."

4. Be Kind and Forgive

- Paul concludes with a call to kindness and forgiveness:
Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
- "Forgiveness is powerful," Yaya shared, her voice soft with emotion. "When we forgive, we reflect God's mercy. It frees us and brings healing."

Practical Applications for the New Self

To help the family understand how to apply these teachings, Ryan posed a challenge: "How can we reflect the new self in our everyday lives?"

- **Ariel's Insight:** "I'll try to be more patient with Alice, even when she takes my things without asking."

- **Alice's Commitment:** "I'll share my toys and try to listen when Ariel explains things, even if I don't understand."
 - **Family Reflection:** Together, they decided to end each day by sharing one act of kindness they had shown.
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Takeaway: The Beauty of the New Life in Christ

The family concluded their devotional by summarizing the key lessons of Ephesians 4:17-32:

- **The Old Self:** Defined by selfishness, deceit, and sin.
- **The New Self:** Characterized by righteousness, truth, kindness, and forgiveness.
- **Key Verse:** Ephesians 4:32 - "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Yaya wrapped up the discussion with a thoughtful reflection. "Paul reminds us that the journey of faith is about constant renewal. Every day, we have the chance to take off the old self and put on the new. And when we do, our lives become a testimony to the transforming power of Christ."

Key Points Summary:

1. **Old vs. New Self:** The old self is tied to sin and separation from God, while the new self reflects His righteousness and holiness.
2. **Speak Truth:** Honesty strengthens the bonds of fellowship.
3. **Manage Anger Righteously:** Resolve anger quickly, seeking peace.
4. **Live with Integrity:** Work diligently and speak words that build others up.
5. **Practice Forgiveness:** Show Christ's love through tenderheartedness and mercy.

The journey to "put on the new self" is not just a one-time decision but a daily act of surrender and renewal. Through truth, kindness, and forgiveness, believers can reflect the love of Christ and draw others to Him.