

Text: Eph 4: 17–24...

Divisions in vv17–24

1. What we no longer are... (17–19);
2. **What we must become**... (20–24).

Context:

Verses 17–19 depicts the fallen life of the unbeliever
(cf. Eph 2:1–2; Rom 1:21, 2 Cor 4:4)

We saw that the fruit of wickedness (in v19), received their nourishment through the branches of unredeemed thought patterns (in v18).

We do the things that we do because we believe the things that we believe.

Thought and deed are inseparably tied together for Paul. That is why the exhortation sections in so many of his epistles are preceded by sections of rich and profound theology. Ephesians is certainly no exception to this pattern.

Verses 20–24, act as a bridge—a paradigm—for the very practical exhortations that will follow in the rest of the letter.

The paradigm that Paul puts forth, follows a simple three-step process:

- i) Put off sin (*"lay aside the old self"*).
- ii) Renew your mind (*"be renewed in the spirit of your mind"*).
- iii) Put on righteousness (*"put on the new self"*).

It's important to notice at the end of v24, that this new self with which we are to clothe ourselves, *has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth*.

We don't make ourselves new, God makes us new. Instead we obey to live in this newness of life that has been created by God Himself.

2 Cor 5:17 → "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*"

That brings us to the **Homework:**

How can Paul tell us to put off the old self and put on the new self, when the old self has passed away? Is this not a contradiction? How does this work?

(cf. Gal 2:20; Rom 6:4–6; *But also: Rom 6:10–14; See especially also Rom 8:11–15, Gal 5:16*)

Exploring the Text:

1. What is the foundation reality that enables our ever increasing righteousness? What two ingredients are integral to sanctification? (cf. [Gal 2:20](#))

2. What does Paul mean when he tells us to “be renewed the spirit of our mind?” Practically, how do we obey this command?
(cf. [Rom 12:2](#); [Eph 1:18–23](#), [3:14–19](#); [Col 3:16](#); [1Pet 2:1–3](#))

3. Where does the power come from by which we battle the old self?
(cf. [Rom 8:11–15](#))

4. What is the difference between *salvation* and *sanctification*?

5. Is there such a thing as a Christian who never grows in sanctification? Why, or why not?

6. Do believers have one or two natures? Why or why not? What is (or are) that (or those) nature(s)?

7. How does the Bible say are we affected practically by the still present remnants of our corrupt flesh? Does this affect our innate ability to know what is right? How? (cf. [Jer 17:9](#), [Rom 1:18](#); [Heb 3:13](#); [Jas 1:14–16](#))

8. What happens to a genuine believer who does not voluntarily pursue sanctification? Why?
 (cf. Heb 12:1–14)

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9. What are the practical benefits of a life that is committed to the pursuit of sanctification?
 (cf. Phil 2:12–13; 1Jn 2:6, 3:10, 5:3)

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Cross Reference...

Read: Col 3:1–17

10. Which verses relate to:

- i. Laying aside the old self? _____
- ii. Being renewed in your mind? _____
- iii. Putting on the new self? _____

11. How do Col 3:2, 10 add to your understanding of Eph 4:23? (cf. 2Cor 3:18)

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For Further Reflection:

12. Why does God not sanctify us completely at the moment of our salvation?

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13. In what areas of your life have you been neglectful in “putting off the old man?”

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Notes:

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