

# **BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE**

## **New Clothes for a New Life**

Ephesians 4:25-32

1998

### **Introduction**

Transformation is a primary topic that Paul has been addressing in Ephesians. We have transitioned from darkness to light, from the kingdom of darkness to kingdom of light, from separation from God to intimacy, from aliens to the Bride of Christ, from the pit to palace! We are now the manifold wisdom of God, expressing Christ to the world.

Paul has made it clear that change involves both a "putting off" and a "putting on". It involves a clear and distinct turning away from the ways of the world, being made new in the attitude of our minds and putting on the new self which is created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. However, we tend to resist change. It's important to remember that we don't change to get God's approval but in response to all that God has already accomplished on our behalf! (Ephesians 1-3). God will often use problems in our lives to change us into the image of Christ (Romans 8:28).

What hardships are you experiencing your life right now? He will use difficulties in our lives to bring about the transformation He desires.

In this passage, Paul uses five examples to illustrate transformation.

### **I The True Christian Is To "Put Off" Lying**

#### **A. The "old man" thinks nothing of lying**

##### **1. Blatant lies**

Lying about infidelity, about your work history on a job application,  
Lying before grand juries while under oath, etc.

##### **2. Refined lies**

Exaggerating your accomplishments, shading the truth, making yourself look  
better than you actually are

#### **B. The "new man" puts away lying, and speaks truth with his neighbor**

Col 3:8-10 "But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since

you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Lying has no place in the community of Christ. It is a gross hindrance to the body of Christ. Lying will create disunity, disorder and trouble on every level. Instead, the body of Christ should be marked by a refreshing openness and transparency.

## II The True Christian Is To "Put Off" Anger

A. The "old man" gets angry

**Anger** = To tremble with fear or rage

1. Blatant anger: Explosive outbursts, violent temper accompanied by a lack of emotional and/or physical self-control
2. Refined anger: Passive aggressive behavior, cold shoulder, withholding, withdrawing, sneaky underhanded backstabbing.

B. The "new man" may get angry, but he does not sin

There is a place for anger (righteous indignation). Jesus was angry. God gets angry. Jesus himself was angry on several occasions:

- a. The man with the withered hand that Jesus healed on the Sabbath - Mk 3:5
- b. Jesus turned over money tables in the temple - Jn 2:13-17.

The rule of thumb is we are not to get angry over personal offenses, but over sin and rebellion against God.

The dangers we need to avoid:

1. Allowing it to linger ("do not let the sun go down while you are still angry")  
Ps 4:4 "In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent."

Anger can easily degenerate into self-centered bitterness. To avoid this, Paul exhorts not to let the sun go down on your anger. It recalls the Mosaic Law's requirement that all sureties were to be returned and all wages paid before sunset (Deut 24:13, 15)

2. Allowing it to stumble us ("do not give the devil a foothold")

If this advice is followed, the devil will be given little room to work his destructive trade.

By dealing with things immediately we avoid the potential sins of:

1. Bitterness
2. Emotional withdrawal
3. Gossip
4. Slander

## 5. Retaliation

Rom 12:19-21 "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

However, in order for this to take place we must be willing to:

1. Put God's will above our own
2. Humble ourselves
3. Protect our offending brother
4. See ourselves as members of one another.

## III The True Christian Is To "Put Off" Stealing

A. The "old man" is willing to steal

***Klepton*** = kleptomania = covers every kind of misappropriation.

### 1. Blatant stealing

Armed robbery, shop lifting, breaking and entering, etc..

### 2. Refined stealing

Cheating on your income taxes, being on welfare unnecessarily, doing work under the table, making improper personal use of company property, copying video, audio and software illegally.

1 Cor 6:9-10 "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were."

B. The "new man" not only stops stealing, but works and helps others in need!

***Work*** = Strenuous work that produces fatigue

***Doing something useful*** = Something good

***To share*** = To distribute personally rather than through some intermediary agent

1Thes 4:11-12 "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody."

II Th 3:10-12 "For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat."

#### IV The True Christian Is To "Put Off" Unwholesome Talk

A. The "old man" says what he pleases

*Unwholesome* = Rottenness that produces rottenness

**Illustration:** Bad fruit mixed with bad fruit

1. Blatant unwholesome talk

Swearing, abusive communication, demeaning conversation, dirty jokes

2. Refined unwholesome talk

Gossip, self-centered conversation, petty fault-finding, "sharing concerns over other people's problems", constant complaining, etc.

James 3:9-10 "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be."

B. The "new man" not only avoids "unwholesome talk", but seeks to speak that which builds up those around him

We are to use "helpful" communication = something good (see stealing)

Using our mouths to say only what is calculated to build up the church.

Eph 4:15-16 "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

*That it may benefit* = to confer blessing

In other words, when we part company with a brother or sister, they should feel lifted, inspired, closer to God, hungrier for the things of God, eager to do good, etc. Since God is the ultimate source of blessing, the best thing we can do with our mouths is to exhort and encourage one another with the words and thoughts of God.

Phil 4:8 "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things."

1. Why be concerned about putting off the "old" and putting on the "new man"?

a. When Christians act like the "old man", it grieves the Holy Spirit

The Spirit's goal is to cooperate with God desire that we be conformed to the image of Christ. When I use my tongue to destroy God work, besides sinning,

I'm actually dragging the HS, who is dwelling in me and the other person, into exposure to ungodliness (which is grievous to Him). Any kind of careless, unbecoming talk pains the Spirit.

## V The True Christian Is To "Put Off" Ungodliness

### A. The "old man" is full of violence

**We are to get rid of** = "let it be removed, have no more to do with it"- once for all

#### 1. Bitterness

Aristotle defined it as those who are "hard to be reconciled"

It is the spite that harbors resentment and keeps a score of wrongs

1 Cor 13:5 "It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs."

#### 2. Rage

Rage is what flows from bitterness in an outburst of uncontrolled passion and frustration. It is used for the anger that springs from personal animosity, the flaring up of passion and temper because of personal provocation.

#### 3. Anger

An unjustifiable human emotion that manifests itself in noisy assertiveness and abuse

**Literally** = shouting or brawling

It is associated with rage in Col. 3:8

Col 3:8-10 "But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

#### 4. Brawling

To quarrel or fight noisily. The final end of uncontrolled anger.

#### 5. Slander

**Slander** = False statements or abusive speaking against another -- often leading to damage to the individual's reputation.

The poisonous source of all these regrettable reassertions of the "old self" is malice = bad feelings"

#### 6. Every form of malice

**Malice** = Deep seated animosity that delights in causing others to suffer or in seeing them suffer

### B. The "new man" is full of love

**Be** = Become

Paul realizes that his readers have not yet attained "the full measure of perfection found in Christ (v 13).

### 1. Kind

**Kindness** = love in practical action; to show a sweet and generous disposition.

Eph 2:6-7 "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

**Barclay** = "It is the disposition of mind which things as much of its neighbor's affairs as it does of its own."

### 2. Compassionate

**Compassionate** = tenderhearted

Col 3:12 "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

However, it is practically impossible to extend kindness and compassion to someone with whom we have a grievance. So Paul goes on to speak of ...

### 3. Forgiving

Forgiveness is one of the clear marks of true Christian fellowship

Col 3:13 "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

What should motivate our forgiveness?

The forgiveness of God.

As I demonstrate God's forgiveness, I'm evidencing a true knowledge of God.

#### a. The debtor's servant -Matt 18:23-35

1. Owed millions to his master; begged for time; was forgiven the debt

2. His servant owed him a few dollars; begged for time; the master threw him in prison

Matt 6:14-15 "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Matt 18:32-35 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.

## **Conclusion**

### *Illustration*

You know that warm, loving feeling that comes over during the Christmas season? Thoughts of tree decorating, gift-giving, Christmas caroling, family dinners ... That feeling that makes you want to hug strangers, be generous to the needy, go out of your way to help a friend, do something special to express your love for your spouse?

That is the life of a Christian. If you can live with Christmas in your heart, you will be living the life of the "new man".