

Put On The New Self

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C.S. Lewis once said, “All mortals tend to turn into the things they are pretending to be.” Those who see themselves as bad or worthless will only live up to that perception. They feel that they will never be anything more than what they are at that moment – faulty, broken, mishandled, abused, resentful. There are others, however, who gaze into the spiritual mirror and see the glory of Jesus Christ looking back at them, if only dimly. They perceive their potential for good and holiness, and try to live up to the example given to us in Jesus.

When Paul said, *“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ”* (1 Corinthians 11:1), he was pointing Christians in a different direction from the rest of the world. While most people imitate an athlete, a celebrity, or an influential political figure – all humans, regardless of status – the Christian looks to the heavenly realm for his role model. Everybody seeks to imitate something or someone. Everybody has a treasure they value. Yet the warning is to choose that treasure wisely! *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... for where you treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matthew 6:19-21). You must choose your treasure well because it will take your heart with it! We cannot hide our feelings forever, friends! Many professed believers can get away with it for a long time, but eventually our words, actions, and appearances give us away.

“They followed vanity and became vain” (2 Kings 17:15). Sin is empty, and it will make us empty! The idea is that they became like the gods they worshipped. They bowed down to nothingness and became nothing. The real tragedy was that the followers of the empty religion were living without substance! Their personalities became trivial, and their characters lacked depth. An old saying goes, “Deep down, he’s shallow.” Ask yourself:

- Do I ever have new ideas anymore?
- Am I taking all of my cues from somebody else?
- When was the last time I had an original thought?
- Is my “persona” or image in somebody else’s mold?
- Why do I practice a certain religion?
- Why do I hold certain views on the Bible?

“And they became as detestable as that which they loved” (Hosea 9:10). The writer is pointing out that what you give yourself to is what you end up resembling (Psalm 115:8). If it is an abomination to God, then so are you! If the connection to pagan idolatry is not clear enough, consider some modern examples of this idea:

- Obsession with reality television shows (moral relativism).
- “At least I’m not as bad as...”
- The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10).
- We forget that many celebrities who we adore stand up for political or social causes that ought to be reprehensible to the Christian.

- The power of advertising – suggesting that we must look like, act like, smell like what we are told.

You Have To Put Them On

In order to become the great Christians we ought to be, we have to put on the right things (demeanor, character, speech). We cannot wait around for God to put it on for us. At first, these things may feel unnatural or awkward, just like a new shirt, new shoes, new car, new house, or a new job. But you may wake up one day and realize that they have become as much a part of you as your very body. You have to work past the stage of discomfort if you ever want to make real spiritual progress.

- *“Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light”* (Romans 13:12).
- *“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 13:14).
- *“That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self... and put on the new self”* (Ephesians 4:22,24).
- *“Put on the full armor of God”* (Ephesians 6:11).
- *“Put them all aside... And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity”* (Colossians 3:8,14).