

Put On the New Man

Once we realize that nothing about our old natures can be salvaged and we have submitted to God's remodeling of our minds, we are ready to "put on" the new nature. God has always promised us that He wants us to be "*partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Peter 1:4). He has prepared a new nature for us which is "*created in righteousness* (good relationship with God) *and true holiness* (undefiled by sin and old nature thinking and behaviors)." Now we have a chance to really become like Jesus. This process happens progressively in our lives as God reveals to us old nature thinking and behaviors that need to be changed. He then establishes in us the right way to think so our motivations, words and actions will line up with His. Soon we begin to permanently "put on" new thinking, words, and behaviors enabled by God's Spirit.

Examples

The really great part about this portion of Ephesians chapter 4 is that the Apostle Paul not only discusses the process of transformation but he gives a whole list of practical examples:

- ◆ We need to stop our old nature habit of lying (verse 24). Renewed thinking tells us that everyone is potentially our "neighbor" so as a Christian we are to serve them not lie to them. Consider Jesus' words about neighbors in the story of the Samaritan in Luke 10:29. In my new nature relationship to the other members of the Body of Christ, maintaining our unity demands that we be honest and truthful to one another.



"Transformation"

How Christianity Works Series

By Pastor Curt Carter

- ◆ We also need to control our language and stop using the corrupt expressions of the old nature (verse 29). Renewed thinking reminds us that we are now representing heaven on earth as ambassadors of God. Our new nature responsibility is to speak grace into people's lives and words that build up and not tear down.
- ◆ We should put off bitterness, anger and grudge keeping (verse 31-32). We need to ever remember God's kindness towards us when we were His enemies (Romans 5:8-10). As a believer, we now should demonstrate kindness, being tender-hearted, approachable, and showing forgiveness to others.

I've only picked a few of Paul's examples in this portion. Explore it for yourself to discover more practical ways to be transformed into the likeness of Jesus. Submit to God's plan for the remodeling of your life into His new creation and the results will surprise you!

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**"Change my heart oh God
Make it ever true,
Change my heart oh God
May I be like you?"**

**You are the Potter
I am the clay
Mold me and make me
This is what I pray."**

*** Song by Eddie Espinosa**

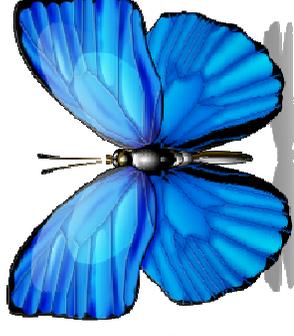
Anyone who has an encounter with Jesus Christ will soon want to become like Him. To think like Him, to speak like Him with authority and compassion, and to do great, sacrificial acts like He did



for us. But then we realize how different we are in our humanness. We try to give up our old behaviors and model new ones after Jesus, but it isn't easy because they seem so unnatural, so unlike what we have learned in life. It doesn't take long to see that becoming like Jesus is going to take some real work. But the good news is that God desires for us to be transformed into the likeness of His Son (Romans 8:28-29.) The Apostle Paul said it this way *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord"* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

In Romans 12:2, Paul says, "...be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." For



the word 'transformed', Paul uses the idea of metamorphosis or changing so completely that we emerge brand new from the cocoons of our old natures just like a caterpillar emerging as a beautiful butterfly! He indicates that the transformation begins with renewing the mind or remodeling how we think about everything.

And Paul tells us the renewal begins *"in the spirit of your mind"*, that deepest recess of the mind, once dead to God but now activated by the presence of the Spirit. This is the place in our mind where our thoughts connect with God. God understands our thoughts even as we think them (Psalm 139:2 & 1 Corinthians 3:20) and He constantly expresses His divine thoughts towards us (Jeremiah 29:11). Even though His thoughts are far superior to ours (Isaiah 55:8-9) He wants to transform our thinking to align with His (Proverbs 16:3). Renewal includes remodeling our minds like a contractor remodeling a room. Things may need to be stripped down to the bare studs before a real transformation can begin. We need to put off old nature thinking to embrace divine thoughts.

So let's look at Biblical transformation beginning in Ephesians 4, where the Apostle Paul reminds his readers what they were like before they met Jesus. *"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness"* (verses 18-19). This describes people whose minds are so dark and hearts that are so blind that they don't even know that they are missing experiencing life with God. Instead, they are looking for ways to medicate the pain they are feeling in their empty souls. This is where we all have come from. The prophet Isaiah also described this condition as *"... the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness..."* (1:5-6a). There is no way we can salvage our old nature. Back in Ephesians 4, Paul give us three insights into how to be transformed:

Put Off the Old Man

As we have already discovered, we should not spend time trying to salvage our old human natures. Paul tells us to 'put off' our former manner of life because it has been corrupted by the deceitfulness of sin (verse 22). That means that the thoughts we used to think, our motivation for our actions, and even the words and expressions that we used were corrupted by sin and we didn't even know it. Even when we expressed love to others our motives were corrupted by selfishness and by what we would get out of it.