



Put Off the Old, Put On the New: A Call to Holy Living

A Brief Bible Study on Spiritual Growth and Habitual Sin

A Call to Lasting Change

We know we are called to change. As followers of Christ, we are not only forgiven—we are invited into a new way of living. We confess our sins. We long to grow in holiness. But if we're honest, change doesn't always come easily. Some sinful patterns feel stubborn, embedded deep within our routines, responses, and even our identity.

At times we may cry out in frustration, echoing the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 7:15:

"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do."

If you've ever asked, *"Why do I keep doing what I hate?"*—you are not alone. Scripture doesn't ignore our struggle. Instead, it gives us a clear and powerful framework for real transformation: the *"put off / put on"* principle, most clearly explained in **Colossians 3:5–14**.

Paul urges believers to *"put to death"* what belongs to the earthly nature—sexual immorality, anger, slander, and deceit. But he doesn't stop there. He also tells us to *"put on"* compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. It's not just about stopping sin; it's about replacing it with the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) through the renewing work of the Holy Spirit.

Change is not simply behavior modification. It's spiritual transformation, made possible by the grace of God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and sustained through the truth of God's Word.

In this study, we'll walk together through:

- **Recognizing sinful patterns** for what they are—not just surface struggles but heart-level issues.
- **Rejecting sin** by bringing it into the light and choosing to walk in repentance.
- **Replacing old habits** with Christlike virtues that reflect our new identity in Him.

This is not a quick fix. It's a spiritual journey of growth, surrender, and grace. But take heart—God doesn't ask us to change in our own strength. He has already given us "everything required for life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). And He who began a good work in you *will* carry it on to completion (Philippians 1:6).

Let's press on, not in our power, but in His. Together, let's learn to "put off" the old and "put on" the new—for the glory of Christ and the joy of walking in His freedom.

Understanding the “Put Off / Put On” Principle

Colossians 3:9–10 (ESV):

“Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”

Christian transformation is not just about turning away from sin—it is about *turning toward Christ*. In these verses, the apostle Paul provides a powerful image: the Christian life involves both *putting off* the old self—our sinful nature, attitudes, and habits—and *putting on* the new self—formed and shaped in the likeness of Jesus. This isn't a one-time event; it's a continual process as we grow in knowledge and maturity.

Think of it like changing clothes. You don't throw a clean garment over a filthy one. You take off what's soiled, wash thoroughly, and clothe yourself in something new, appropriate, and reflective of who you now are. The believer is no longer defined by sin but by their new identity in Christ—chosen, holy, and beloved (Colossians 3:12).

The “put off / put on” principle appears throughout the New Testament (see also Ephesians 4:22–24 and Romans 13:12–14). It offers a daily, Spirit-empowered rhythm for real growth: confession and cleansing, renewal and replacement. This is how we become more like Jesus—not by striving harder in our flesh, but by cooperating with the Spirit and walking in obedience to the Word.

Practical Application

According to Colossians 3:9, what are we to “put off”?

“...you have put off the old self with its practices.”

Paul says that the old self comes with practices—sinful behaviors, thoughts, and patterns that once ruled our lives. These aren't just bad habits; they are the fruit of a heart disconnected from God. But in Christ, we are no longer slaves to sin (Romans 6:6). We are called to *intentionally identify and reject* the sinful tendencies we once embraced.

Reflection Prompt:

Ask the Lord to reveal the specific attitudes, behaviors, or thought patterns that you need to lay aside. Be honest before Him.

My List to Put Off:

(Use Colossians 3:5–9 or the sin reference list at the end of the study as guidance.)

- _____
- _____
- _____

Examples:

- Anger instead of gentleness
- Bitterness instead of forgiveness
- Pride instead of humility
- Lust instead of purity
- Deceit instead of truthfulness

According to Colossians 3:10, what are we to "put on"?

"...the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."

Putting on the “new self” means embracing who we truly are in Christ. This isn’t about faking perfection—it’s about *living from* the righteousness that Christ has already given us. The new self is shaped by God’s truth and transformed through a renewed mind (Romans 12:2). This is not a passive process. We actively choose to walk in godliness through the Spirit’s power.

Reflection Prompt:

Now, prayerfully consider what Christlike attitudes or behaviors you will “put on” to replace the old ones.

My List to Put On:

- _____ (instead of _____)
- _____ (instead of _____)
- _____ (instead of _____)

Examples:

- Patience (instead of irritation)
- Gratitude (instead of envy)
- Love (instead of indifference)
- Integrity (instead of dishonesty)
- Peace (instead of anxiety)

Going Deeper:

Ask yourself:

- What triggers my “old self” responses?
- What does the “new self” look like in my home, work, or church life?
- Am I regularly renewing my mind with God’s Word?

Remember, sanctification is a process. The more we *behold* Christ in Scripture, the more we become like Him (2 Corinthians 3:18). Our daily “clothing choice” reflects where our heart is rooted. So let us put off the old—and put on Christ (Romans 13:14).

God's Grace for Change

Many women feel defeated by sin patterns they've battled for years. But God does not call you to change without giving you the strength to do so.

Philippians 4:13

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

Ephesians 4:22–24

"...put off your old self... and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."

Do you believe God will give you grace to change? What does Philippians 4:13 tell you about your ability to obey God's commands?

Write a personal reflection or prayer of commitment:

Broader Biblical Support

Here are other passages that reinforce this teaching:

- **Galatians 3:27** – You have put on Christ.
- **Romans 13:14** – Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Ephesians 6:11, 14** – Put on the full armor of God.
- **Colossians 3:12-14** – Put on compassion, kindness, humility, patience, and love.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:8** – Put on the breastplate of faith and love.

Read Colossians 3:12-14. Which of these Christlike traits do you most need to “put on” right now? Why?

Eternal Perspective

2 Corinthians 5:2

“For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling...”

Even our longing for heaven reflects this desire for transformation. While we wait, we are called to live in light of eternity, daily putting on the character of Christ.

How does knowing your eternal future with Christ motivate you to live differently today?

REFLECTION

- What sinful habit is hardest for you to “put off”? Why?
- What new way of thinking or acting would reflect Jesus more clearly in your daily life?
- How can someone pray for you this week as you walk in this truth? Will you ask a trusted friend to do so?

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for giving us clear instruction in Your Word. You have not only told us what to lay aside but shown us how to clothe ourselves with Christ. Help me to walk in step with Your Spirit. Reveal what needs to go, and by Your grace, help me put on what honors You. Strengthen me to live as a new creation—renewed in the image of Christ. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

OPTIONAL PERSONAL CHALLENGE

This week, choose one sinful pattern to focus on. Using the **“put off/put on” charts** provided, write out a daily plan to:

- Confess the sin each morning.
- Ask God to help you recognize it when it arises.
- Practice the new habit instead—with His strength.
- End each day in prayer and thanksgiving for even the smallest steps of progress.

A. Personal Sins and Struggles

Sin/Struggle	Scripture 1	Scripture 2	Biblical Response/Principle
Anger	Matt. 5:22	Ecc. 7:9	Self-control
Bad language	Eph. 4:29	Eph. 4:29	Edify
Bad motives	1 Sam. 16:7	Gal. 1:10	Seek to please God
Bitterness	Acts 8:28	Heb. 12:15	Take heed of myself
Boasting / Conceit	James 4:16	Prov. 27:2	Humility
Bodily harm	Acts 23:12	Matt. 5:44	Love your enemies
Comparing	2 Cor. 10:12	2 Cor. 10:13	Realization of who you are in Christ
Complacency	James 4:17	2 Cor. 5:15	Live unto God
Complaining	Lam. 3:39	Phil. 2:14	Do all without complaining
Covetousness	Ezek. 33:31	Col. 3:5	Mortify flesh
Discontent	Job 10:1	Phil. 4:11-13	Satisfaction
Disobedience	1 Sam. 12:15	Heb. 5:9	Obedience
Doubt / Unbelief	Rom. 14:23	Rom. 4:20-25	Faith
Evil thoughts	Matt. 9:4	Phil. 4:8	Think on these things
Evil whispering	Prov. 16:28	Titus 3:2	Showing meekness
Fear of man	Luke 12:4; Prov. 29:25	1 John 4:18; Prov. 3:26	Love for God and others
Foolish jesting	Eph. 5:4	Eph. 5:4	Thanksgiving
Gossip	1 Tim. 5:13	Rom. 14:19	Peacemaker
Hatred	Matt. 5:21-22	1 Cor. 13:3	Love and kindness
Holding grudges	Prov. 24:29	Lev. 19:18	Love thy neighbor
Hypocrisy	Matt. 23:28	Matt. 6:24	Serve Christ
Idle words	Matt. 12:36-37	Prov. 21:23	Bridle tongue
Impatience	Heb. 10:36	James 1:2-3	Rejoicing in trials
Irritation to others	Prov. 25:8	Rom. 12:18	Peaceableness
Jealousy	Gal. 5:26	Gal. 1:10	Seek to please Christ
Judging	Rom. 14:10	Rom. 14:13	Search my own sin
Lack of love	1 John 4:7-8, 20	1 Thes. 3:12	Love
Lack of rejoicing always	Phil. 4:4	1 Thes. 5:16	Rejoice
Lack of submission	Psalms 78:8	Psalms 51:17	Broken will
Losing temper	Prov. 14:17	Prov. 16:32	Self-control
Lost first love	Rev. 2:4	Psalms 78:7	Remember what God did
Lying	Eph. 4:25	Zech. 8:16	Speak truth
Murder	1 John 3:15	Prov. 10:12	Love

Murmur	John 6:43	Phil. 2:14	Do all without murmuring
Sin/Struggle	Scripture 1	Scripture 2	Biblical Response/Principle
Other gods	Deut. 11:16	Eph. 4:6	Jesus first place
Pride	Prov. 6:16-17	James 4:6	Humility
Profanity	James 3:10	Eph. 4:29	Edify
Rebellion	Deut. 9:24	Joel 2:12-13	Submitting
Sassing	Prov. 25:23	Eph. 5:21	Respecting one another
Selfishness	Phil. 2:21	Matt. 16:24-25	Death to self
Spiritual adultery	Rom. 7:1-6	Rom. 7:1-8	Alive unto God
Strife	Prov. 26:21	Phil. 2:3	Esteem others
Stubbornness	Acts 7:51	Rom. 6:13	Submission
Unforgiving spirit	Mark 11:26	Matt. 6:14	Forgiving spirit
Ungratefulness	Rom. 1:21	Eph. 5:20	Thankfulness
Worry / Fear of circumstances	Luke 10:41	Phil. 4:6-7	Prayer, trust in God
Wrath	James 1:20	James 1:19	Self-control

B. Irresponsibility

Sin/Struggle	Scripture 1	Scripture 2	Biblical Response/Principle
Copping out	Matt. 25:24-25	Luke 14:27	Discipline
Burying talents	Luke 12:47	Luke 12:48	Perfecting abilities
Poor conduct in church	Psalms 89:7	Ecc. 7:1	Reverence
Double-mindedness	James 1:8	James 4:8	Draw near to God
Half-heartedness	Hosea 10:2	Josh. 24:14-15	Sincerity and truth
Inhospitable	Matt. 25:42-45	1 Peter 4:9	Hospitable
General irresponsibility	James 4:17	1 Cor. 4:2	Responsibility
Laziness	Prov. 19:24	Prov. 13:4	Diligence
Neglect of Bible study	Matt. 22:29	2 Tim. 2:25	Scripture study
Neglect of prayer	1 Sam. 12:23	Psalms 55:17	Praying
No soul winning desire	Prov. 11:30	Matt. 4:19	Evangelism
No tithing	Mal. 3:8	2 Cor. 9:6-7	Tithing
Not doing your best	Ecc. 9:10	Col. 3:23	Wholeheartedly
Procrastination	Prov. 27:1	Ecc. 9:10	Discipline
Unfaithfulness	Luke 16:12	1 Cor. 4:2	Faithfulness

C. Worldly Pleasures

Sin/Struggle	Scripture 1	Scripture 2	Biblical Response/Principle
Adultery	Matt. 5:27-28	1 Tim. 5:22	Inward purity
Cheating	Mal. 1:14	Luke 8:15	Honesty
Crowd-following	John 6:66-67	John 1:35-37	Follow Jesus
Provocative dancing	1 Thes. 5:22	1 Cor. 10:31	Glorify God
Dating wrong people	2 Cor. 6:14	2 Cor. 6:17-18	Separation
Drunkenness	Prov. 20:1	Eph. 5:18	Be filled with Spirit
Drugs	1 Cor. 3:16-17	1 Cor. 6:19-20	Glorify God in body
False balance	Prov. 11:1	2 Peter 1:5-10	Balanced life
Fornication	Eph. 5:3	1 Thes. 4:3-7	Self-control
Gambling	Matt. 21:12	Rom. 12:11	Stewardship
Ungodly appearance	1 Cor. 11:14	1 Cor. 10:31	Glorify God
Homosexuality	Rom. 1:26-27	1 Peter 1:22	Obey the Bible
Immodest dress	Prov. 11:22	1 Tim. 2:9	Modesty
Improper dating	1 Thes. 4:4-7	Gal. 5:24-25	Crucify flesh
Lust of eyes	1 John 2:16	Matt. 6:22-24	Serve the Lord
Lust of flesh	Gal. 5:17	Gal. 5:16	Walk in the Spirit
Sinful movies	Prov. 23:7	1 Tim. 4:12	Be an example
Heavy petting	Rom. 1:24-25	1 Thes. 4:3-7	Abstinence
Overeating	Phil. 3:19	1 Cor. 9:27	Self-control
Preferential treatment	James 2:1-6	Luke 6:31	Fairness
Presumption on the future	Prov. 27:1	James 4:13-14	Patience
Unwholesome music	Prov. 23:7	Eph. 5:19	Edifying music
Smoking	1 Cor. 6:19-20	Phil. 1:20	Magnify Christ
Speeding	1 Peter 2:13-14	1 Peter 2:13	Submit to authority
Stealing	Eph. 4:28	Eph. 4:28	Work
Stumbling block	1 Cor. 8:9-13	Rom. 14:21	Be a stepping stone
Temporal values	Matt. 6:19-21	Phil. 3:8	Eternal values
Witchcraft / Astrology	Isaiah 8:19; Mal. 3:5	Micah 5:12-13	One true God