The "Dos" and "Don'ts" for New Self

Ephesians 4:25-32

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I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT

A. Historical Background

The People of God (the Israelites/Christians), those whom God **chose** to become **The Redeemed of the Lord**, those whom He **set apart** to use as His Instrument for the Advancement of His Kingdom on earth *struggled* in giving up the **Old Self** so that *they can become* the **New Self**. In both the history of the Israelites and Christians, this struggle between the Old Self and the New Self is obvious – clearly revealed. There is *no denying* that this intense struggle between the **Old Self** and the **New Self** *is both real and true!* I know this because it is part of my struggle to this day! I suspect that you all experienced this *intense battle* raging in your lives! The intensity and frequency of the struggle between the Old Self and the New Self may have *receded* in degrees over time, but we all experience it from time to time even now!

B. Biblical Context

The Biblical Context for **the Old Self** and **the New Self** has to do with *the intense struggle that takes place internally*. For **radical change of behavior** to take place *in the formation* of **Godly Character** in **the New Self** the **sinful/ungodly Character** of **the Old Self** *must die*, *be it slowly or rapidly!*

The two cannot *coexist* in the same person! **That creates lots of problems!** In the Old Testament Era, the Israelites *struggled to change* because they didn't want to part with the Egyptian in them! They wanted to *hold on to* the Egyptian way of *thinking*, *believing* and *living* which amounted to second class citizenship at best or slavery, oppression and exploitation on the other extreme! That was **the Old Self** each of them came out with when God *delivered* them from Egyptian bondage! **To get rid of the Egypt in them**, God had to show them His Awesome Power and Glory in the way He brought them out of Egypt. Then through Moses, God gave them **the Law** which was *designed* to **radically change** them, that is, by removing sinfulness -- wickedness, evil deeds, lies, deceitfulness, killing, idol worship, etc. to create **the New Self** *through Redemption.* Most of the Israelites didn't want *to give up* their **Old Self**! Individually and collectively, they went through *intense internal struggle* because they *preferred* **the Old Self** and refused to allow **the New Self** to

emerge! *They didn't want to change!* ***Therefore, they resisted God!*** *For 40 years, God was patient with them! But they were stubborn and refused to change!* ***They paid the Ultimate Price! Of those who left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb made it into the Promised Land! That is the most tragic story by any measure!***

II. The Lesson: The "Dos" and "Don'ts" for the New Self

The *backdrop* for the *divine command* to "**put off**" sinful behavior is **The Price Jesus paid on The Cross** for our Redemption/Salvation *for the forgiveness of sins! Jesus died so that those who believed in Him can be transformed* into the New Self *which can only happen by giving up* ***the Old Self****! Transformation into the New Self requires that the Old Self must die! Jesus died so that those who have been redeemed in His Blood can live a New Life!* ***Radical Change*** *must take place! For that to happen, the Believers must give up their old ways of sinful thinking, believing and living! Radical Change must manifest itself in the Character of the New Self. God has already done His Part! He sent Jesus to die for our sins! God made a way for our Salvation through the Blood of Christ! He left us with His Word. He sent The Holy Spirit to empower us and The Word of God to teach, enlighten and guide us! God gave each of us Spiritual Gifts with which to do the Work of Ministry! God raised Pastors and Teachers through whom to speak to us, instruct us, help us and "prepare us for the works of service." He gave us The Church for us to Fellowship, Grow Spiritually and be prepared to advance His Kingdom on Earth! (Ephesians 4:1-16).*

1. **vv. 20-24**. **You Were Taught to be Christ-Like for a While**.

In summary, it was as if God was saying to the Ephesian Church that *by now, no trace of the* ***Old Self*** *should have been found in anyone of them!* Apostle Paul had spent considerable time with the Believers in Ephesus preaching and teaching them about God, the Way of Christ and His Plan for their lives, individually and collectively as a church. Apostle Paul was *surprised* to hear some of them were behaving as "the Gentiles" even though they were redeemed by the Blood of Christ *a while back*! In verses 20 and 21, he said to them "**You, however, did not come to know Christ that way**. Surely, you *heard* of Him and were *taught* in Him in accordance with the Truth that is in Jesus. You were *taught*, **with regard to your former way of life**,

- **to put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires'
- **to be made new** in the attitude of your minds;
- **to put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

Let me ask you a couple of questions for the *sake of relevance* to our time/us.

a) Have you ever been surprised by **<u>your own words, deeds and attitude</u>** which were contrary to what you "were taught" in Sunday School for years, perhaps decades? In other words, have you been *surprised* by how **ungodly** *your* **words**, **deeds** and **attitudes** were toward people (family member, friend, church folk)?

b) Have you ever been *surprised* by Christian folk that **never changed** after 15, 20, 30, 40 … years being in Church?

2. **<u>vv</u>**. **<u>25-32</u>**. **After Redemption must come Transformation in Christ!**

The Old Self Must Die for the New Self to Emerge!

FROM DEVIL-LIKE	**TO CHRIST-LIKE**
<u>PUT OFF</u>: 1. **Falsehood** (stop lying, being deceitful!) 2. **Sleeping with your anger** 3. **Rage, Anger, Brawling, Slander** along with every form of malice, 4. **Stealing** 5. **Unwholesome talk** (that tears down and hurt people) 6. **Speech, deeds and life-style** that *grieves* **the Holy Spirit** 7. **Vengeful** (filled with hate, vengeance, and cruelty) These are few of the characteristics of Satan. A Christian cannot exhibit ***these characteristics of the devil!*** Each Saved person must "**put off**" these ***demonic behaviors*** of the devil sooner than later! **Stop looking like the devil!**	**<u>PUT ON</u>**: 1. **Truth**; speak truthfully. 2. **Control Yourself (**exercise Self Control) 3. **Work and Earn Your Living** (no work should be beneath you) 4. **Wholesome Talk (**that encourages, comforts and builds up people which benefits the Church) 5. **Forgiving** (be merciful, gracious) 6. **Kind and Passionate** These are few of the Divine Characteristics which are appropriate for the Believer. To be Christ-like, each of us must "**put on**" the **divine virtues** of God eagerly, willingly and progressively! **Let us be Imitators of God!**

III. CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

1. Romans 12:1-2.

<u>Offer Your Bodies as Living Sacrifices, Holy and Pleasing to God</u>.

"Therefore, I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God's merc, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

2. Colossians 3:1-25.

<u>Put to Death whatever belongs to your earthly nature</u>:

sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming."

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in Glory" (verses 1-5).