



CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

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PART 7: HOW TO DRESS PROPERLY



Have you heard the phrase “clothes make the man”? A lot of money is spent on clothes throughout the world. The right combination of clothes can enhance a person's appearance. The right color and style go a long way towards the process of dressing up properly. Of course, the reverse is true as well. So, when a person clothes himself, he wants to be sure to put on the right clothes.

Paul, uses this analogy of taking off (“throwing off”) old clothes and putting on new clothes to help us understand how to “dress properly” as Christian believers.

Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God-- truly righteous and holy. (Eph. 4:21-24 NLT)

A. CENTRAL QUESTION

How are Christians to throw off the old sinful nature and put on the new nature?¹

B. THE OLD NATURE VS. THE NEW NATURE

Characteristics of the old nature	Characteristics of the new nature
Rebels against God Pursues worldly desires Egotistical, puts oneself above others Dishonest, perverts the truth Impatient and easily irritated Lacks self-control Restless	Acts toward others with godly love Experiences joy by trusting the Lord Has a deep sense of peace Practices patience toward others Treats others with gentleness Walks by faith in Christ Views others better than themselves Practices self-control

¹ “Nature” is a “capacity” within a believer.

C. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it often difficult to discuss sin (desires of the old sinful nature)?
2. Do you feel that most Christians are aware of the internal struggle they experience between their old sinful nature and their new nature? How can a better understanding of this struggle help them?
3. What specific things can Christians do to deal with this internal struggle between the old sinful nature and the new nature?

D. APPLICATION: HOW TO THROW OFF THE OLD SINFUL NATURE AND PUT ON THE NEW NATURE

1. **R** _____ that you still have this old sinful nature (Romans 7:15-20).
2. **R** _____ the notion that you can overcome this struggle in your own strength (Romans 7:24).
3. **R** _____ yourself that as a believer in Jesus Christ you not condemned (Romans 8:1).
4. **R** _____ the Holy Spirit to strengthen your new nature (Romans 8:2).
5. **R** _____ your new nature every day (Colossians 3:10).

E. THE BOTTOM LINE



This struggle is a continuous process with many victories and defeats as the new nature battles with the “tent” in which it resides—the old man, old nature, flesh. However, this struggle is only temporary! Thanks to Jesus you've already won the battle!