

CONNECTING MY MIND WITH MY LIFE

❖ DIRTY CLOTHES

I cannot imagine what it would be like if rather than washing my clothes that I had been wearing all day and working in that my wife just hung them back up in the closet. Rather than washing my socks and underwear, she just threw them back in the underwear drawer. Thankfully, my wife is the Queen Clean and what I have just described would never happen in her house. In fact, all of my children are clean freaks just like my wife. She taught them really well.

I do not like wearing dirty clothes at all. Every night when I get ready for bed, I take off the clothes that I have worn that day and put them in the dirty clothes hamper. I put my button up shirts in a bag and when I have enough, I take them to the dry cleaners. I normally only wear my suits twice, and I take them to the dry cleaners with my shirts. For the most part my amazing wife washes all of the other dirty clothes every day. She may miss a day here and there, but that is very seldom. So, every day I get to put on fresh, clean clothes. I simply do not like dirty clothes.

❖ WHAT ABOUT YOUR SPIRITUAL CLOTHES?

So, what about what you wear spiritually? The Scriptures say that there are certain attributes that you need to “**put off**” and certain attributes that you need to “**put on**”. Both the verbs for “**put off**” and “**put on**” are words that are a reference to taking off dirty clothes and putting on clean clothes. Think of what God wants you to “**put off**” as **your** dirty clothes and what He wants you to “**put on**” as **His** clean clothes. We take dirty clothes off, we put clean clothes on. That is the picture here. So, when you know that there is something in your life that is contrary to God’s Word, your mindset has to immediately be that you have to take off your dirty clothes and put on God’s clean clothes. That is a great word picture of what God wants you to do. Both putting on and putting off are **intentional decisions** and require a particular mindset to do so. You have to build a neural pathway and reinforce it with the right thinking to achieve this. For instance, [Colossians 3:8-10](#) says,

Col 3:8 (NKJV) **But now you yourselves are to put off all these (dirty clothes): anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds (dirty clothes), ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,**

Please appreciate that the lists you find in Scripture are very important. When you come to a list in Scripture, you need to just put everything in “Park”. Lists are a major way that God **consolidates** truth for you. He puts everything in one place so there is no mistake what He is talking about. In this passage in [Colossians 3:8-10](#), God says that you are to “**put off**” the following - “**anger, wrath (rage), malice (bad feelings toward someone else), blasphemy (verbal abuse and slander), filthy language (cursing),**” and “**lying**”. You could just as easily add the “**works of the flesh**” in [Galatians 5:19-21](#) to this list which is much longer. That list is very complete and says,

Gal 5:19 (NKJV) **Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like;**

of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Spiritually, think of these as your dirty clothes that God wants you to “**put off**”. If any of these negative qualities are in your life, God wants you to put them off and put on His spiritual qualities. This is as clear as it could possibly be. When you read a list like this, this is God speaking specifically to YOU. These are verses that you must pay attention to because **they reveal what may not be right in your life**. What I am trying to do is to push you out of your spiritual comfort zone, to move you out of your Christian cocoon, to challenge you in areas in which you know that you need to grow but are not growing, and to confront you with obvious “dirty” areas of your life that need to be “**put off**” so that you can “**put on**” God’s “clean” clothes. Every good minister of the Word should be doing that or he should not be in the pulpit. **You must allow the Word of God to confront you and to make you uncomfortable when you read it.** If you are reading along in the Scriptures, and you begin to feel uncomfortable, it may be because the Holy Spirit is speaking to you about an area of your life. When you read God’s Word, you have to let it challenge you so that it can change you.

KEY PRINCIPLE 27: YOU CAN NEVER BECOME WHAT GOD WANTS YOU TO BECOME BY REMAINING LIKE YOU CURRENTLY ARE.

You can never grow spiritually without changing what needs to change in your life. If all that you want to do is to simply coast on into eternal life, then you probably will. Listen very carefully. **If you never allow the Word of God to confront you, then it will never change you.** I have heard it said that **change is hard in the beginning, messy in the middle, and amazing at the end.** I think there is a lot of truth to that. This has been our mantra since the first message taught – change your thinking, change your life.

One of the foundations of the Christian life is learning how God changes you. **What God is doing is always readjusting your thinking to His thinking.** It will do you well to begin to EMBRACE **everything** in your life that you know God wants you to change. In **1 Timothy 6:11**, Paul said the following to his very godly disciple Timothy. He said,

1Ti 6:11 (NKJV) But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

He was saying, “*Timothy, **you have to keep changing.** You cannot become content with where you are, so always be pursuing God’s best for your life and letting go of that which hinders you to do so.*” Here is what Paul told Timothy to do. First, “**flee** and run away as quickly as you can from that which is wrong. Then secondly, “**pursue**” and run as fast as you can towards that which is right. Both “**flee**” and “**pursue**” are present tense, imperative mood, active voice verbs. That means that you are to always be doing them – “**running from and running toward, putting off and putting on, letting go and clinging to**”. If you never change anything, then nothing will ever change. **Please do not make the fatal mistake of expecting everyone else to change.** What invariably happens when someone reads the lists we have just read, they always see someone else and their faults in the verses. No, no, no! You cannot read the Scriptures as if they are always for someone else. They are written directly and personally to you. You take care of your faults as revealed in these lists and do not worry about the faults of others. That will

prove to be a total disaster. The moment that you start pointing out to someone all of their faults, you are headed down a very slippery slope. **You must see the Scriptures as written to you.** You change, you adjust, you do what God wants you to do, you change your thinking, you become God's model of what it means to be a fully committed follower of Jesus Christ. Never attack another person's faults.

It is verses like [Colossians 3:8-10](#), [Galatians 5:19-21](#), and [1 Timothy 6:11](#) that God uses to stretch you and to challenge you. You must determine if you actually believe them and that they actually apply to you personally. Trust me, but they do. If you believe them, then you will by faith apply their truths to your life. You will begin to “**put off**” and to “**put on**”. You have to be willing to allow God to do exactly that in your life. When you develop this neural pathway, this spiritual mindset, this way of thinking, your life will change. The Scriptures are God's tool to stretch you to become what He wants you to become, so let them do what they are designed to do – to change how you think so that you can change how you live.

KEY PRINCIPLE 28: GOD'S WORD ALWAYS REVEALS WHAT IS RIGHT ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND WHAT IS WRONG ABOUT YOUR LIFE.

So what does this mean for you? It means that to be successful as a Christian that **you MUST accept God's assessment** of what is right and what is wrong. If you consistently have negative traits in your life, you can be assured that you know it and unfortunately you have become content to live how you want to live. I can assure you that being angry and using “**filthy language**” is not how God wants you to live. Quite frankly, it is the EXACT OPPOSITE of how God wants you to live. I have always heard it said, and I believe it is certainly true, that “*sin will always take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay*”. If this describes your life, then you have to develop a completely different mindset, a new neural pathway – and God has given you the supernatural power to do just that. You have to recognize where you are spiritually and then **cultivate** your mind to think like God thinks. That is why Paul said in [Philippians 2:5](#),

Php 2:5 (NKJV) **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,**

The Greek Interlinear translates it as “**Let this thinking be in you**”. Once again, the question is simple - “*How would Christ want me to respond to this difficult situation in which I find myself?*” It is that simple of a question, but we have muddied the waters and made it much more complicated. We have determined that we can ignore what God says, do what we want, and everything will work out for us. That is an illusion, a lie from the devil, a crazy and twisted pipe dream. That is exactly what and how the enemy wants you to think, and that is exactly how he controls your life. It is by getting you to believe his lies. As we continue through this series, I have several sections on exactly how the enemy influences you to believe what he wants you to believe, so please hang on until we get there.

In order to combat the lies of the devil, you must develop and build the correct spiritual mindset that God wants you to have. Remember that a spiritual mindset is an ongoing, permanent way of thinking that is always the exact opposite of a fleshly or worldly mindset. [Colossians 3:8-10](#) is your starting point, your foundation for knowing how God thinks. If God tells you to “**put off**” something it is because He knows that what you do not “**put off**” will **eventually** bring various kinds of harm to your life. It is spiritually inevitable. **You can never do the wrong thing and get the right result.** That is borderline

insanity. It is the mark of someone who does not think like God thinks, and someone who thinks very foolishly. Likewise, if God tells you to “**put on**” certain attributes it is because He knows that those qualities will bring great blessing and benefit to your life. He knows that **when you do the right thing that you will get the right result**. God knows much better than you do what you need to do, so you must pay attention to His lists. Here are just three of God’s “**put on**” attributes. These are God’s clean clothes that He wants you to display. [Romans 13:12](#) says,

Ro 13:12 (NKJV) **The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.**

The Greek Interlinear translates this last phrase as “**the weapons of the light**”. Think of it as arming your life with truth. You put on and apply to your life the weapon of God’s truth.

[Romans 13:14](#) says,

Ro 13:14 (NKJV) **But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**

Honor Christ, exalt Christ, elevate Christ, extol Christ, revere Christ. Always put Christ first in your life. Think of Christ as the absolute finest of God’s clothes that He wants you to wear, and then put on Christ, wear Christ, display Christ in everything that you do – every word, every act, every thought. Do not settle for less.

[Colossians 3:12-14](#) is also a critical list for you. It tells you EXACTLY how God wants you to think when difficult moments happen in your life.

Col 3:12 (NKJV) **Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.**

These verses are God’s list for helping you to evaluate where your spiritual life actually is. Have you “**put on**” these qualities in your life - **tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, love**. This is what God wants you to “**put on**”. You have to build a neural pathway and reinforce it with the right thinking to achieve this.

Meekness is “*prautes*” and it is when we accept God’s dealings with us as good and we do not resist that work of His in us. It is a condition of the mind and heart that is gentle.

Let us assume that you know that you are inevitably going to be confronted with a difficult or trying circumstance. It could be something at work or someone where you work. It could be a relational problem, a marriage issue, or a financial difficulty. Whatever it is, you know it will challenge your patience and your resolve to respond how God wants you to respond. Here is what you need to do. This is so super important, so listen very carefully.

KEY PRINCIPLE 29: PRE-DECIDE HOW GOD WANTS YOU TO RESPOND TO A DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCE BEFORE IT EVER HAPPENS.

If you know that you are likely to find yourself in a difficult and very uncomfortable circumstance, you need to **PRE-DETERMINE** in advance that you will not respond with ungodly words, actions, and attitudes that God has clearly told **you** to “**put off**”. You take off your dirty clothes – right? You settle that before anything ever happens. It is super critical to your thinking process that you determine beforehand how you will respond to difficult moments. You will have them. Trials and struggles will come, so you need to be mentally prepared as to how you will respond before they ever happen. [Proverbs 25:28](#) says,

Pr 25:28 (NKJV) **Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.**

Self-control is your path to spiritual freedom. Why? It is because self-control allows you to do what is right, even when you do not want to do the right thing. Control is not the issue. **Surrender** is the issue, and surrender produces freedom.¹ Self-control is much easier when you mentally pre-decide that you will surrender your will to God’s will when a conflict raises its ugly head. [Proverbs 16:32](#) says,

Pr 16:32 (NKJV) **He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.**

Let us assume that you are someone who chooses to live for yourself and you always do what it takes to get what you want. No matter how things develop, you are always going to say what you want to say. You have absolutely no self-control. If that describes you, then what will happen is that you will become a very lonely person. **When you choose your will over God’s will, it will leave you empty, disappointed, frustrated, and discouraged.** It will. [Romans 1](#) confirms that the worst thing God can do to you is to give you what you want. Until you learn that lesson, you will always find that **you being self-centered is your worst enemy.**

For instance, just assume that you have to deal with someone who is consistently rude and abrasive. You know that they are rude and that they will probably say something ugly to you or about you the next time that you see them. What do you do? It is simple. You go to God’s Word and you find out exactly how God would want you to respond to that individual in a way that would honor God. Please do not miss what I just said. You find out from Scripture exactly how God wants you to respond to your trial. **You ALWAYS put God’s Word and God’s honor above your feelings.** You may not “feel” too loving towards someone, but that does not mean that you have a green light to treat them in an unloving way. That would actually be sin. Here is what you do. You **predetermine** that you will be kind to them and say something edifying to them. You make that simple choice before anything ever happens. You making that decision **beforehand** is what God wants you to do. So, when something difficult happens, you have already decided how you will respond. One verse that can help you with an abrasive person is [Ephesians 4:29](#).

Eph 4:29 (NKJV) **Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.**

Read it like this – “**Gary, let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but Gary you speak what is good for necessary edification, that your words Gary may impart grace to the hearers**”. That is exactly how God wants you to think and respond. This happens **before** the trial, **before** the struggle,

¹ Dyck, 19, 32-33.

before the stress raises its ugly head. You could be dealing with someone who is consistently angry, lazy, hurtful, selfish, dishonest – anything and anyone. If you do not pre-determine how you are going to respond before something happens, you will invariably react and respond the exact opposite as God would want you to respond. You must decide beforehand how you will respond to trials and struggles you know that you are facing. **You make your decisions and then your decisions make you.** You learn how God thinks and then you make it the goal of your life to think the same way. You must connect your mind with your life. This must become YOUR way of life.

So, what happens when you violate verses like this? What is that saying about you? It is saying that you do not care what God's Word says. You are thinking to yourself, "*Gary, you have no idea what I am going through in my life. You have no idea why I lost my temper or said something ugly. No one is perfect.*" Listen carefully. Your excuses are nothing more than your personal justification as to why you believe that you are exempt from obeying God's Word. You are not exempt. I am not exempt. Where does God give anyone an exemption from obeying Him? No one is exempt, and until you have that mindset, you will continue to become angry and say hurtful words and have bad feelings toward someone. Stated a different way, it is like you are not really serious about being a Christian. You are more satisfied with living how you want to live than how God wants you to live. Your personal wants are greater to you than His honor. That may be hard for you to accept, but it is what you need to accept.

It is like you do not believe that God will give you the power to do what He wants you to do. You must know that He will. He promises that He will. Your wrong thinking is what needs to change, and if you never make those mental changes and adjustments, then in essence you will become very comfortable in disobeying God's Word.

<p style="text-align: center;">KEY PRINCIPLE 30: GOD'S TRUTH IS ALWAYS CONFRONTATIONAL TO THE PERSON WHO DOES NOT WANT TO OBEY IT.</p>

So what have we addressed today? What were the key points of this study today?

1. **You must allow the Word of God to confront you and to make you uncomfortable when you read it.**
2. **KEY PRINCIPLE 27: YOU CAN NEVER BECOME WHAT GOD WANTS YOU TO BECOME BY REMAINING LIKE YOU CURRENTLY ARE.**
3. **If you never allow the Word of God to confront you, then it will never change you.**
4. **What God is doing is always readjusting your thinking to His thinking.**
5. **KEY PRINCIPLE 28: GOD'S WORD ALWAYS REVEALS WHAT IS RIGHT ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND WHAT IS WRONG ABOUT YOUR LIFE.**
6. **You MUST accept God's assessment of what is right and what is wrong.**
7. **You can never do the wrong thing and get the right result.**
8. **KEY PRINCIPLE 29: PRE-DECIDE HOW GOD WANTS YOU TO RESPOND TO A DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCE BEFORE IT EVER HAPPENS.**

9. Self-control is your path to spiritual freedom.

10. You being self-centered is your worst enemy.

11. You ALWAYS put God's Word and God's honor above your feelings.

12. KEY PRINCIPLE 30: GOD'S TRUTH IS ALWAYS CONFRONTATIONAL TO THE PERSON WHO DOES NOT WANT TO OBEY IT.

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