

STUDY 20 – IS THAT A DUCK?

PART 1A – WHAT TO CHANGE

[Romans 13:14](#) is our next verse on “WHAT to change” and it says,

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

The phrase we will be addressing is “**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ...**” The verb “**put on**” is the unusual parsing of a verb that is in the imperative mood, but the aorist tense. This verb parsing is normally used to provide a sense of urgency to what is being said. You may be reading a book, and the author places one of his key ideas in **bold capital letters and then underlines it**. He is drawing your attention to his key idea. So, the aorist imperative is how Paul emphasized something very important to his readers. The verb “**put on**” literally means to put on some clothes. Figuratively, however, it is asking the believer to put on and wear the same character and disposition that Christ has. As much as is possible, we are to be like Christ in every area of our life and clothe ourselves with His character, His grace, His kindness, His forgiveness. We are to talk like Christ talked. We are to treat people the way that Christ treated people. Whatever we see Christ doing, we simply choose to do the same thing. That is the spiritual essence of this verb “**put on**”. Now, please remember what we have learned so far.

OUR LIFE IS ALWAYS HEADED IN THE DIRECTION OF OUR DECISIONS.

Whatever we think about the most is where we are headed. We make our decisions and then our decisions make us. Now, I need to make a critical statement relative to “**putting on Christ**”.

YOU WILL NEVER BECOME LIKE CHRIST IF YOU DO NOT IDENTIFY WITH CHRIST.

You cannot become like someone that you have never met or known, and in the same way, you cannot “**put on Christ**” if you do not know Christ, if you have never been saved. The Bible says that we are to do two specific things - “**put off the old man**” and “**put on the new man**”. [Ephesians 4:20-24](#) says,

Eph 4:20 (NKJV) **But you have not so learned Christ,** ²¹ **if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:** ²² **that you PUT OFF, concerning your former conduct, the OLD MAN which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,** ²³ **and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,** ²⁴ **and that you PUT ON the NEW MAN which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.**

[Colossians 3:8-10](#) virtually says the same thing,

Col 3:8 (NKJV) **But now you yourselves are to PUT OFF all these: 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,** ¹⁰ **and have PUT ON THE NEW MAN who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,**

So, what is the difference between the “**old man**” and the “**new man**”? Well, figuratively the “**old man**” represents the life that sin created in us **BEFORE** we came to Christ, and the “**new man**” represents the life that the Spirit of God created in us **AFTER** we came to Christ. The problem for the “**old man**” is that no matter how hard he may try to be spiritual and try to be good, he simply does not have the capacity to do either. You may want to be the world’s greatest broad jumper and be able to jump 100 yards, but

no matter how much you may train and how hard you may try, you simply do not have the capacity to broad jump 100 yards. In the same way, no matter how hard the lost man tries to be good enough to merit God’s salvation, he simply does not have that capacity. **He is lost for a reason.** As far as God is concerned, a person cannot be “**spiritual**” until the Spirit of God is actually living inside of them, and for that to happen a person must be “**born again**”. So, the first thing that has to happen is that **the lost man has to accept that he is lost.** I have heard it said that “*Someone has to know they are lost before they will ever get saved*”. Let me give you a hint on how to possibly think about this in a different way.

The less that God impacts and influences someone’s mind and heart and thinking, the much greater the possibility that they are not really saved.

Now, I did not say that they were not saved, but that there is a greater possibility that they may not be saved. The “**new man**”, the saved man, the spiritual man always has God on His mind, is always desiring to know God and obey God more. “*Why would anyone who knows that God never really impacts their life think that they are saved?*” From where would they get that idea? Certainly not from God. **2 Corinthians 13:5** says that we are to “**examine ourselves to see whether we are even in the faith**”. So, we MUST “**examine ourself**”, examine our life, look at our life, and test our life to determine whether we are truly a believer. You can go to church, but that does not make you a believer any more than going to your garage makes you a car. Genuine salvation is always life-transforming and if you do not believe that, then you have accepted Satan’s lie. Trust me, but the enemy has no reluctance whatsoever in trying to convince someone that they are saved when in reality he knows that they are not.

REAL SALVATION ALWAYS MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE IN A PERSON’S LIFE.

If someone’s so-called salvation is not making a meaningful difference in their life, then I seriously doubt that they are saved. They may have become religious, but they have not become righteous. If someone denies that reality, then they have no understanding as to what the Christian life really is and what it actually does to you and in you. You can personally know whether or not you are saved if you will simply examine your life and take the proverbial “**EYE TEST**”. Here is the eye test. If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, swims like a duck, quacks like a duck, has feathers like a duck, then chances are very good that it is probably a duck – right? So just take your own personal “eye test” and look at your spiritual life. Is it real, is it a façade, is it meaningful or meaningless?

The eye test is simple, so think of it this way. “*Is Jesus Christ actually living His supernatural life in me?*” That is the eye test. “*Is Jesus Christ genuinely living in me, changing me, controlling me, strengthening me, teaching me, leading me? Is His life becoming my way of life more and more, or do I still much more prefer doing my own thing? Is His way of talking becoming my way of talking more and more, or do I just always speak my mind and say whatever I want to say? Is His love flowing through me to those around me, or am I still grumpy, grouchy, and negative with people?*” This is **your eye test**– “*Is the life of Christ really in me or not?*” *Is He actually living His life in me and through me?*”

Here is what I know. **The Word of God and the work of God is never passive in your life.** God is always actively, dynamically, and spiritually working in the life of a true believer through His Word. God did not save you and then just say “*See you later alligator*”. God saved you and by His Spirit has clearly made known to you that He came into your life and saved you, strengthens you, teaches you, and cares for you. If someone does not know that, then I sincerely doubt that they are born again. Why? It

is because **GOD** is ALWAYS helping you to progressively become more and more like Christ, and that is how you can know that He is living in you and that you are one of His children. By its very nature, that is exactly what salvation is doing. It is constantly changing you. The nature of God's salvation is that He Himself is always making an incredible difference in a person's life. He changes how they live, how they talk, how they make decisions. Real salvation always changes everything. Paul said that "**the old things pass away and all things become new**". So, just ask yourself – "*Can others see that God is living His life in me and through me?*" [1 John 5:13](#) says something very important,

1Jn 5:13 (NKJV) These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, and that you may *continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

The words "**may know**" is one Greek word - "*oida*", and it is in what Greek scholars consider to be the most important tense in the New Testament – the "perfect tense". The perfect tense represents something that happened in the past, but it is still having an ongoing impact on the present. Let me make it simple. "**You yourself**" (subjunctive mood) "**know**" supernaturally that you were saved in the past and you know that you are still saved in the present and you know that you cannot "**lose**" your salvation. It means that you clearly perceive and understand what God has done for you and are fully convinced with every ounce of your being that you are saved. The word "**know**" literally represents that your heart is **overflowing** with this knowledge regarding your salvation. No one on this planet could ever convince me that I was not saved. What I know about God and what He has done for me in Christ can never be stolen from my mind and my heart. I was genuinely saved, I know it, and it is still impacting my life. This is something that God has done both in me and for me, and it should be the same for you. If this "**fullness of knowledge**" and perception and understanding of who you are in Christ is NOT in your life, then all I can do is encourage you to give your life to Christ today. You may not get tomorrow.

This casual, nonchalant, optional "*take it or leave it*" kind of Jesus that some people have, it has nothing to do with genuine biblical faith. It is not real Christianity. These kinds of people just "**SAY**" that they believe something. My greatest pastoral fear that troubles me and distresses me is for those who have heard the gospel and the truth over and over and over again, yet still refuse to submit their life to Jesus Christ. **Those people have reduced the greatest to the least and have forfeited the best for the worst.** They have downgraded the most critical issue in their life to the least critical issue. God keeps reaching out, reaching out, and reaching out, and they keep ignoring and ignoring His every effort to gain their heart and love. He remains patient and longsuffering, yet they just pay no attention to it. Other than maybe **half-heartedly** attending church sometimes, there is nothing spiritually significant happening in their life. Why? It is because they have deceived themselves into thinking that just saying the right thing like "*Oh yea, I'm saved*" equals salvation. In God's sight, that is pure nonsense. They have demoted God to a useless, meaningless, worthless idea. Their problem is that **they have never seen or personally known Christ as a real person.** He is just an idea to them. Please listen carefully. **GOD IS NOT AN IDEA.** Do you for one second think and believe that the Creator of eternity, the only One who could make something out of nothing, and the One who sacrificed His only Son is just an "idea"? **You cannot reduce God to an idea, or a concept, or some fickle feeling that you have on the inside that has no impact on your life.** Eternity and salvation and truth and heaven and hell are not just ideas.

Listen. You cannot JUST **say** “*I believe in God and I know that I am saved*”. When I hear someone tell me that, I just cringe on the inside. If I ask them “*Are you a fully devoted follower of Christ*”, they always say the same thing – “*Oh yea, I believe in God. You don’t have to worry about me.*” Nope. You are the only one I do worry about. Those words are empty, lack spiritual substance, and are not heart felt. **So many people believe that if they just “SAY” the right thing that that makes everything right.** That is a spiritually absurd and futile way to think. Listen to Jesus in [Matthew 7:21-23](#).

Mt 7:21 (NKJV) “**Not everyone who SAYS to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will SAY to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’**”

When I read this entire section from [Matthew 7:13-27](#), I see two of everything. I see two roads. One is wide; one is very narrow. I see two trees. One is bad; one is good. I see two confessions. One is “**Lord, Lord**”; one is “**I never knew you**”. I see two foundations. One is built on sand; one is built on a rock. In v21-23, the people say “**Lord, Lord**”, but then Jesus says “**I never knew you**”. These are people who said all of the right things, but they were never saved. They just knew how to say the right words, and **they bought into the lie that saying the right thing equals salvation.** That is a very bad spiritual formula. Listen. God does not want you to have a relationship with the idea of salvation, with the idea of God, but with the glorious Person of Jesus Christ. You have to ask yourself simple questions.

“Do I really have a genuine, meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ today, right now? Am I truly yielded to His Word or am I just doing my own thing, doing whatever I want to do?”

Knowing the truth and saying that you believe the truth does not make you a Christian.

What makes any of us a genuine follower of Christ is when we reach that point in our life where we willingly “entrust” our entire life to Jesus Christ. You may ask “*How do I do that?*” Well, it is no different than buying an airplane ticket and getting on a plane to take you somewhere. When you do that, you are completely entrusting your life to the pilot of that airplane. You do not know the pilot or anything about flying airplanes, but you, by faith, are willing to entrust your life to the pilot and get on the plane. Every person who is lost must believe the gospel and that Christ is God’s ONLY answer for dealing with their sin and the ONLY means that God has provided for their salvation. They must take their meaningless ideas about salvation, discard them like rubbish, and then sincerely commit their life to Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, the lost man thinks that he has a better idea about salvation than God and that what he wants for his life is far superior to God’s plan for his life. That is a really, really **bad idea**. We have just finished studying in [Romans 8:6](#) that **the worldly mind is a complete dead end for your life.** Here is what happens when you think however you want to think. Listen very carefully.

You think that you are going somewhere, but in reality, your worldly thinking only leads you to nowhere, and when you get to nowhere, you have no idea how to get back to somewhere.

Just ask some alcoholic, some crackhead, or some angry, bitter, unforgiving person. They have absolutely nothing good to share with you - nothing. You will never hear them say “*Oh, I’m an alcoholic and this is the best life ever*” or “*I’m a crackhead and I just love it*”, or “*I’m a really angry, bitter person and it is so satisfying.*” It is nothing but death, death, death. These people are dying a thousand deaths

every day. Unfortunately, however, these are not the worst scenario. The worst scenario is the person who casually, almost indifferently, says, “*Oh yea, I believe in God. Don’t worry about me, I’ve got this.*” I seriously doubt that. When you look at their life, they simply do not pass the eye test. Why? I will tell you one last time and we will end. **It is because Jesus Christ is NOT in them and therefore He is not living in them,** and unfortunately, **their life** is a constant testimony of that horrifying reality. I have just one thing to encourage you with as we finish. Please, do not waste your life away on things that do not have any real value. Make your life count, give it meaning, and the way to do that is to become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. He is and always has been the life for which you are looking.