

Putting Off and Putting On

ANYTHING THAT WE WANT TO DO WELL AT IN LIFE REQUIRES EFFORT. THOSE WHO ARE TOPS IN THEIR FIELD IN LARGE PART ACHIEVE WHAT THEY DO BECAUSE THEY WORK HARD AT IT. THE SAME HOLDS TRUE FOR CHRISTIANS GROWING IN CHRISTLIKENESS AND BECOMING THE PEOPLE GOD INTENDED FOR US TO BE. IT TAKES WORK TO DEVELOP GODLY BELIEFS, HABITS, ATTITUDES, THINKING, AND BEHAVIOR. IT ALSO CALLS FOR LETTING GO OF WRONG BELIEFS, HARMFUL HABITS, UNGODLY ATTITUDES, AND BAD BEHAVIOR.



THE BIBLE TELLS US TO "PUT AWAY: ANGER, WRATH, MALICE,¹ SLANDER,² AND OBSCENE TALK FROM YOUR MOUTH.³ PUT AWAY FALSEHOOD, LET EACH ONE OF YOU SPEAK THE TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOR.⁴ LET ALL BITTERNESS AND WRATH AND ANGER AND CLAMOR AND SLANDER BE PUT AWAY FROM YOU, ALONG WITH ALL MALICE.⁵ LET US ALSO LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, AND SIN WHICH CLINGS SO CLOSELY, AND LET US RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US.⁶"

CONVERSELY, WE ARE TO "PUT ON THEN ... COMPASSIONATE HEARTS, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, MEEKNESS, AND PATIENCE, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER AND, IF ONE HAS A COMPLAINT AGAINST ANOTHER, FORGIVING EACH OTHER; AS THE LORD HAS FORGIVEN YOU, SO YOU ALSO MUST FORGIVE. AND ABOVE ALL THESE PUT ON LOVE, WHICH BINDS EVERYTHING TOGETHER IN PERFECT HARMONY. AND LET THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULE IN YOUR HEARTS."⁷

¹ **malice:** desire to cause pain, injury, or distress to another

² **slander:** a false and offensive statement about a person

³ Colossians 3:8

⁴ Ephesians 4:25

⁵ Ephesians 4:31

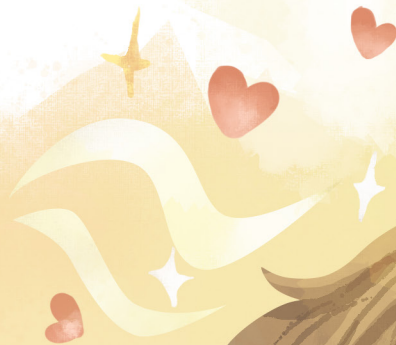
⁶ Hebrews 12:1

⁷ Colossians 3:12-15



PUTTING ON KINDNESS, HUMILITY, PATIENCE, AND COMPASSION, OR PUTTING AWAY ANGER, MALICE, ENVY, OR EVIL DESIRE DOESN'T HAPPEN NATURALLY. THEY ARE THE FRUIT OF A LIFE TRANSFORMED AND EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WE FOLLOW WHAT SCRIPTURE TEACHES, AS WE APPLY OUR FAITH TO OUR LIFE.

THIS ISN'T SOMETHING WE CAN DO ON OUR OWN WITHOUT GOD'S HELP OR GRACE, BUT NEITHER CAN WE EXPECT THE HOLY SPIRIT TO CHANGE US WITHOUT ANY EFFORT OR ACTION ON OUR PART. WE ARE TO "PUT AWAY" THOSE THINGS WHICH DRAW US AWAY FROM CHRISTLIKENESS, AND TO "PUT ON" A NEW SELF, TO LIVE AS BEST WE CAN AS THE NEW CREATURE THAT WE HAVE BECOME IN CHRIST. WHEN WE WORK TOWARD GROWTH IN CHRISTLIKENESS, IT BRINGS GREATER HAPPINESS, RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, SENSE OF FULFILLMENT, AND JOYFUL LIVING.



IN ORDER TO BECOME MORE CHRISTLIKE, WE NEED TO ALIGN OUR LIVES, DECISIONS, ACTIONS, AND SPIRIT WITH GOD AND HIS WORD. DOING SO MEANS "PUTTING OFF" SOME ASPECTS OF OURSELVES AND OUR CHARACTER, AND "PUTTING ON" ASPECTS OF CHRISTLIKENESS. IT MEANS CULTIVATING THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, AND SELF-CONTROL.⁸ AS WE DO OUR PART, WE GROW IN CHRISTLIKENESS.

⁸ Galatians 5:22-23

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