

Change Your Clothes!

Joe Slater

You come in from a hard day's labor. You're hot and sweaty. You don't smell good! After a bath it's better – much better. So you put on your filthy, smelly clothes and head for the supper table, right?

Oh, you wouldn't recommend that? OK, good! Now how about following the same wise course with your spirit? When you came to Christ, you were grimy with sin. Jesus' blood washed away your sins as you were immersed into Him. How much sense would it make to return to the way of life you practiced before you knew Jesus?

Paul calls it **putting off** the old man and **putting on** the new man (Colossians 3:9-10). The old man, he says, walked and lived in such sins as fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, and lying (3:5, 8, 9). Just as you would remove filthy clothes from your body, so Paul says to **“put off”** all of those behaviors. They must not characterize the new man in Christ!

With the filthy clothes taken off, of course you replace them with clean ones. Just so, replace corrupt behavior with godly deeds. Paul continues, *“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 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. But above all these things, **put on** love, which is the bond of perfection”* (3:12-14).

You can't erase your past, but you don't have to continue it. In fact you must not, for *“because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience”* (3:6).

Do you need to change your clothes?

YOU DON'T KNOW CRABS!

I once read the story of a young boy sleeping beside his basket of freshly-caught crabs. A passerby awakened him and told him his crabs were climbing up the sides to get away. “Mister,” said the boy, “You don't know crabs! Just about the time one crab is ready to crawl out, all the other crabs start dragging him back down.”

Isn't that the way human beings act sometimes? They try to drag down those around them. Often their actions are prompted by envy. When a person resents the good fortune of another, he will too often criticize, slander, and attack in order to pull the successful person back down.

Envy and cruelty go hand in hand. Proverbs 27:4 tells us, *“Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before envy?”* The cruelty suffered by Joseph at the hands of his own brothers was the result of envy. *“And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt; but God was with him”* (Acts 7:9).

In fact, envy is credited with the most heinous crime of all time – the murder of the Son of God. In Matthew 27:18, Pilate recognized the reason Jesus had been delivered to him: *“For he knew that for envy they delivered Him.”*

Envy's companions are dark and sinful as well. Titus 3:3 speaks of *“malice and envy”*; and Romans 13:13 talks of *“strife and envying.”*

Envy destroys innocent people, but it ends up making the envious man miserable as well. Proverbs 14:30 says, *“A sound heart is the life of the flesh; but envy is rottenness of the bones.”*

Let's make sure that envy is not a part of our thinking, and that we are pulling others up from the depths of sin rather than back down into it.

--Ron Stough (Duncan, OK) via Old Paths

THE CONTRAST

“For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

One of the greatest contrasts that is present in our modern world is set forth in two opinions. One opinion teaches that man has risen to be a little higher than the monkeys. The other comes from the opposite side that says that man was created a little lower than angels (Hebrews 2:7).

The whole of one's life will be determined by which of these ideas he believes to be fact.

The Bible, as noted above says that we are the workmanship of God. This concept gives dignity, purpose and reverence for life. It gives hope in death because of the resurrection of Christ Jesus.

If man attained his position in the world by climbing up, then he is without God, the world is without design, there is no dignity and no reverence for life. There is no goal worth achieving that will have lasting meaning in the overall course of life.

This philosophy completely dominates the post-modern/pop culture and atheistic mindset. Thus it is little wonder that life has become so cheap and morality has no real influence in today's society.

As for me, I will follow the path that gives life meaning in God through Christ.

--Hugh Shira (deceased)