

The clothes that we wear

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Date: 02 September 2018

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning, everyone. The clothes that a person wears often tell us a lot about who they are, like a police officer. If you see a person wearing a police uniform, nine times out of ten, they're a police officer, right?

You can't be too sure in this country, though, but normally their clothes will indicate to you who they are. You'll notice that our electricity is working much better this week than it was last week, if you were here last week.

Because the electricity people from the city came to fix it, and they found the problem. And I must commend them, they came 15 minutes after we logged the call with them. That was pretty good going. Anyway, how did I know when they knocked on the door that they were here to fix our electricity?

Well, because they were wearing their uniforms that said City of Cape Town on it. So I knew from their clothing who they were, what role they had come to play. Same as prisoners.

If you go to Polsmoor, you'll see that the prisoners wear these bright orange clothes. And that's not a fashion statement. It's because it's to tell us that these people belong in prison for now, that they're going through their sentence.

[1 : 1 1] So if you see someone in those clothes in your back garden, you should probably be concerned. That's not where they belong. They belong in prison. The judge who put them in prison also, when they were doing their job, taking their role as a judge in the courtroom, they were wearing special clothes, a big black robe to signify their role and who they were.

And so clothes are often in our world an important indicator of a person's identity, right? But that's not only true for prisoners and policemen and judges.

It's true for Christians too. If you're a Christian, your clothes should indicate to this world who you are. Now, before you start looking around and see what people are wearing, in this case, what I'm talking about is not material clothes or a particular style of dress.

I'm talking about a particular style of life. A lifestyle that is, of course, just as noticeable as the clothes you're wearing. Because your lifestyle is apparent.

It's a type of clothing, isn't it, that we put on. And really, that's what this morning's passage is all about here in Ephesians 4. It's the type of lifestyle that Christians are called to put on. That's what Paul is talking about.

[2 : 3 0] To indicate who they really are. The lifestyle we are to wear in our world. To indicate the role we play and the identity we have.

So, just a bit of a recap. We've been learning through Ephesians 1 to 3 who Christians really are. And it's been mind-blowing, hasn't it? As we've been opening these chapters and studying them in our growth groups, we've been learning that Christians are not ordinary people.

Christians are called out of the world for a very special role to play that has cosmic effects. And that's what we've been learning in Ephesians 1 to 3.

If you haven't been here for those sermons, it's essential that you hear what Ephesians 1 to 3 says in order to understand the rest of the letter. So, I encourage you to go to our website and listen to the sermons.

But now, we're in Ephesians 4. So, we're in that part of the letter that teaches us how that information of the first half of the book should change our day-to-day lives.

[3 : 37] But, of course, we will never have the correct motivation and incentive to do what Ephesians 4 to 6 says unless we understand Ephesians 1 to 3.

So, that's where we are now, though. And so, here in Ephesians 4, 17, in the beginning of our passage this morning, the Apostle Paul writes this. He says, So, I tell you this and insist on it in the Lord.

In light of everything he said up until now, I tell you this and insist on it in the Lord that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do. Okay, so he's saying that your new identity that he's just been describing to us as a Christian now needs to be seen in a new lifestyle, a new style of dress in terms of the way you live.

And then he goes on to describe it as a new set of clothes when he talks about, later on in verse 22, putting off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires, being made new in the attitude of your minds, and putting on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

So, he describes the Christian life basically as this set of clothes. You put off the old, you put on the new. The idea is that each person who calls themselves a Christian needs to be wearing the appropriate clothing for that identity.

[4 : 58] They need to put on the appropriate lifestyle. And Paul is adamant about this. He doesn't just say, guys, I think you should, or it's probably a good idea to live this way.

Look what he says. At the beginning, verse 17, he says, I insist on this in the Lord. So, it's actually not even Paul, the apostle, insisting on it. It's Jesus himself insisting on it through Paul.

Jesus himself is adamant that his people should be wearing the right clothes as we go about his work on earth. He's like an army general inspecting the uniforms of his troops before they march out.

That's what Jesus is essentially, through Paul, doing here in this passage. He's wanting us to check whether we're wearing the correct clothing appropriate to the role that he's given us in this world.

And we're going to discover what those clothes are this morning and over the next couple of weeks. But, before we get into it, I want to pause because I need to point out something very important about what this passage is teaching.

[6 : 09] And that is that Paul, the apostle who writes this, is not here calling us to change ourselves or to change our hearts or our desires. Because that's something we can't do.

The Bible teaches only God can change us and our hearts. Only God can give us new hearts by his Holy Spirit. And we've learned that he has done that.

For true believers in the gospel, those who have true faith in Christ, have been changed inwardly by Jesus. He calls it, Jesus calls it being born again. That's something not that we don't do.

We don't decide to be born. We weren't decided. We didn't decide to be born in the first place, right? Next week, we're looking forward to baptizing Imogen, the latest member of our church family.

She didn't decide to be born, right? That was her parents' decision. She had no say in it. It's the same for spiritual birth. We don't decide to be born again.

[7 : 08] We don't decide to see the truth. We don't wake up one morning and say, I think I'm going to believe in Christ. God gives that to us as spiritual sight, as a gift. And when he does that, he transforms us inwardly, gives us new life.

Ephesians tells us he raised us with him when he's given us spiritual birth. And he gives us a new identity, and he gives us a new status in the heavenly realms, we've learned.

And so, this passage is not about how to change yourself. Rather, it's about you needing to make sure that you are living the appropriate lifestyle for who Jesus has already changed you to be.

And do you see the difference? It's vitally important. Being a Christian is not about self-improvement, like you might think it is when you visit some popular Christian bookstores and read books about, you know, how to make yourself better, how to improve yourself.

It's not about self-improvement, and it's not about how to become worthy of heaven, or how to become worthy of God. That's not what Christianity is about. That's what every other false religion in the world is about, by the way.

[8 : 15] It's about how to do things to become worthy of God and worthy of eternal life. But, spoiler alert, you can never do that. You've already failed to be worthy of eternal life.

The only human who's ever lived worthy of God is Jesus Christ, and He offers you His righteousness. And so, being a Christian is not about how to become a citizen of heaven, but it's about learning you already are one through faith, if you believe that that belief has been given to you by God.

If you're in Christ, if God has brought you into His family, which is evidenced through your faith in Christ, and the fruit from that faith, well then, being a Christian is actually learning just to reflect who you already are.

Who you are in heaven to reflect that on earth. That's what, that's what, we're here to learn. If you have trusted in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then your status in heaven is already secure, it has already changed, and you now just need to change your clothes on earth to show that.

Like a prisoner who's been released from prison. Right? His status under the law has now changed, and so what can he do? He can take off his orange overalls, and he can replace them with civvies, with civilian clothes.

[9 : 45] To, to reflect that he is now a, a citizen of society once more. Well, in the same way, the change of lifestyle for a Christian is something we now get to put on because we've been released from the prison of God's wrath and guilt for our sin.

So we get to put on, we get to take off our prison clothes, and we get to put on the new clothes that God is giving us. Clothes that we couldn't put on before Jesus redeemed us and rescued us.

And that's why Paul begins in verse 18 by talking about those who have not been redeemed and saying how unable they are to live the life God wants them to because they're still in prison spiritually.

That's what he's talking about. Their blindness, their hardness of heart, they're, they're locked in prison. They can't do anything about it. They're unable to live a godly life. But we are able.

We're not in prison anymore if we trust in Christ as Christians. Jesus has given us a new identity in heaven and new clothes to wear on earth that we now, like that prisoner, get to wear as a privilege.

[10 : 58] Living a godly life, living the life that God has called us to live, is not a duty that we have to kind of force ourselves to do. It's a privilege that we get to do.

It's clothes that we get to wear now that we've been released. And that's also why you may have noticed in verse 23 when Eliel read that for us that there's also a vital middle step.

Did you notice that? Between taking off the old clothes and putting on the new clothes, there's a vital middle step in verse 23 which is being made new in the attitude of your minds.

You can't put on the new clothes unless you're first made new in the attitude of your minds, i.e. that you realize who you are. But do you see what Paul's saying there?

That this transformation process, the putting off and the putting on, requires you to realize that you are no longer a prisoner. That is key to helping you take off your prison clothes and put on new ones.

[11 : 58] If you think you're still a prisoner, you will still wear prison clothes. Unless you understand and you are certain of your salvation and your status in Christ, you will still wear the clothes of the world.

And so, I guess the question I've got to ask you before we move on is, are you free yet? Are you free of prison? Has Jesus freed you of sin and guilt?

Or are you still standing guilty under God knowing that you've sinned against Him and knowing that He is a just judge and knowing that you must face His judgment and not knowing what's going to happen when you die?

If that is still you, you are still in prison. Spiritually. You have not been freed. You have no assurance. And so, you can't put these new clothes on yet.

Try as you might. And so, you need to go back and read the first three chapters of Ephesians before you read these next three. You still have to find salvation in Jesus if you are not sure of where you stand with God.

[12 : 57] Jesus has done everything to make sure that you can know that you can, you can know where you're going because, because He died on the cross. He shed His blood for all of your sins if you would come and believe and trust in that.

If you don't yet and if you're still unsure of where you're going in eternity, you need to still find salvation in Jesus. You need to be freed from your slavery to sin.

You need to be freed from the guilt of sin. But if you have, if you are saved, if what we've learned so far in these chapters in Ephesians is true of you, well now is the time to change your clothes, to reflect that.

So how do we do that? Well, that's what we begin to see in verse 25 onwards. And also, notice that the Apostle Paul says that we must. Back in verse 17, I tell you this and insist on it in the Lord that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do.

I.e., you will automatically. So even though you've been changed, your identity has changed, you still need to do something not to change your identity but to change the clothes that you wear. You see what's going on here.

[14 : 07] As the prisoner, you've been freed. You're no longer a prisoner so take off your prison clothes. But you still need to do that. That's what he's saying. And so, we see what those new clothes are from verse 25 onwards and we learn what particular items of lifestyle we get to put on.

We don't have to put on. We get to put on, right? New ways of speaking. New ways of treating other people. And notice, as you go through them, as you scan your eyes over them from verse 25 onwards, these new clothes we get to wear.

Notice what's interesting about what Paul says is they all include first a negative item we need to take off before the positive item we get to put on. For example, verse 25 doesn't just say we are to put on truth in our speech.

First, it says we are to put off falsehood in order to put on truth. Or verse 28, it doesn't just say that we need to share with those in need but we first stop taking what we shouldn't, stop our greed before we can put on generosity.

So you see what's happening here. There's something that needs to be taken off before we get to put on this new clothing. But lots of Christians don't get this.

[15 : 23] You know, we often wonder why it's so hard to put on and maintain good Christian habits. Don't we? It's hard.

It's tough. Why is it so hard? Well, because often it's because we haven't properly taken off our old habits first. That's why we struggle to put on the new habits.

Or on the other hand, people just focus on stopping their bad habits. You know, I know this is a bad habit. I shouldn't be doing it. And so I'm going to stop. I'm going to steel myself to stop this bad habit and be very disciplined to stop it.

And then what happens? Well, those bad habits after a while just come creeping back, don't they? And people wonder why. Why is it so hard to stop these bad habits? They just come creeping back into my life.

Do you find that when you try to stop bad habits? Well, maybe it's because you don't know what good habits to replace those bad habits with. You know, if you take off your clothes, but you don't have any other clothes to replace them with, what's going to happen?

[16 : 31] You're either going to run around naked or you're going to put your old clothes back on. And so this list of new clothes includes two things, both a taking off and a putting on.

And so let's now turn to them and see what they are. And we find the first area we must change is our attitude to the truth. Verse 25 that you see on the screen behind me says, therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor for we are all members of one body.

Okay, so a vital item of clothing for a citizen of heaven is truth in our speech with one another. Truth in our speech with one another.

That's why I think that it would be really difficult for a Christian to be on Survivor. You know the TV show, the reality TV show Survivor, where they put a whole bunch of people on an island and they've got to survive and then they've got to vote each other off and they have to kind of stab each other in the back and there's a lot of lying involved.

In fact, you can't get ahead in that game unless you deceive and lie and it's hard to be a Christian and be on that game. Incidentally, Gene and I watched one of the latest seasons and there was a Christian pastor on Survivor.

[17 : 53] His name was Werner and it was very interesting to watch how he tried to play the game but tried to be true to who he is and it was hard for him.

It was hard and sure, you could say, well, it's a game and part of the game is lying so it doesn't really count if you're on the game, that's okay. But even then, even if that is true, I think as a Christian grows in their understanding of who they are, lying becomes less and less easy in any context.

It becomes less and less natural to do if you're a Christian. And so, take it as a compliment if someone says you're a bad liar. Say to them, thank you very much.

Because lying has no part amongst God's new humanity. There will be no lies in heaven and so there should be no lies amongst the citizens of heaven while we're on earth. Even though it is the pattern of this world, isn't it?

It's normal, even expected in lots of office contexts, work contexts. You're expected to kind of massage the truth a little bit.

[19 : 02] You're expected to be a little bit deceptive. And often when you're in sales, you'll find that. When you're not a good enough salesman, you often will resort to lying or deception to try sell your wares.

It's the pattern of this world. And you're always wondering in our world, aren't you, of what you hear, what is true and what isn't. What's fake news and what's real news? You're on the internet, you look at your news feed on social media and you wonder of all the headlines and stuff, what if this is true and what isn't?

And it's such a bother to try sift through everything to try find truth. You always wonder when you hear people talk and say stuff, whether they're being honest or not in this world.

Well, people shouldn't have to wonder that with Christians. Truth in all our dealings should be one of the items of clothing that marks us out as God's people in this world.

they should be able to trust us implicitly. Next, we need to consider our patterns of anger. Verse 26, in your anger, do not sin, do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

[20 : 16] Now, there are times in life when you will get angry. And sometimes for good reason, mostly not, but sometimes, there will even be good reason to be angry.

And so, Paul is realistic here. He doesn't say never get angry, but he says, be careful when you do and remove it as quickly as you can before it turns into sin, which it inevitably will if you don't deal with it.

That's what he's saying here. And so, you can see it as a negative command, do not sin in your anger, but also an implied positive command, will learn to quickly reconcile with who's making you angry, which he means by do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

That is an implied positive command. But that's not the pattern of this world, is it? That's not what we naturally do. People often let their anger sit and simmer and even justify their sins against other people.

It's almost like we thrive on having a grudge against someone. It gives us an excuse to be nasty to them. When they've wronged us, even if they've given us a good reason to be angry, what do we do with that anger?

[21 : 32] Yes, I keep it. So, at the right time, I can strike out against them and feel justified for it. So, basically, we use our anger as an excuse to sin. And we keep hold of it.

We cherish it. Well, that's not an appropriate thing for God's people to do. Why? Well, because of Psalm 4, actually, which is quoted here by Paul, which Paul, not the apostle, but Paul Kuyumbo read for us earlier, which says this, Psalm 4, in your anger do not sin.

That's what Paul's quoting. When you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the Lord. And so, in the context of the psalm, it's talking about God's people facing enemies and troubles, and it encourages them to recognize that God is in control of their circumstances, and so, they are not to fear their problems or be angry at their enemies or their situations, but rather to trust God and to do what is right.

And so, that's what the psalm is saying. And so, what Paul is saying here in Ephesians, by quoting this psalm, he's not giving us permission to be angry. Often people will use this verse as permission.

Yes, I'm allowed to be angry, and I'm allowed to hold onto it because the Bible says that I can. But actually, that's not what he's saying here. He's not giving us permission to be angry. Rather, he's saying that continued anger is a sign that you don't trust God.

[23 : 04] That's what the psalm is saying. So, that's what Paul means when he quotes the psalm. And while the psalm says, well, when you're angry, you've got to pause and search your heart and sleep on it, Paul, in writing this, goes further and says, well, no, don't even sleep on your anger.

Stop it before the sun even goes down. Address what's making you angry as soon as you can. And so, this is not a permission to be angry. Rather, it's insisting that God's people are the ones in the world who will get rid of their anger first before anyone else.

Unless, of course, you live in Greenland, where the sun only goes down every six months, and then you can hang on to your anger. No, that's not what it means. The sun going down thing is not to be taken literally, obviously.

The point is that a Christian deals with anger before it can cause any harm. You've got to see your anger as a hand grenade with the pin pulled out that could explode at any moment and cause some serious harm to you and the people around you.

And so you've got to get rid of it as quickly as you can. So your anger, when it comes as a hand grenade. Then the next item of Christian clothing is how we view our possessions and our money.

[24 : 27] Verse 28, anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work doing something useful with their own hands that they may have something to share with those in need. And so this is talking about getting out of the habit of looking for ways to get something without working for it.

Which is of course what stealing is just the ultimate example of. But it's just the pattern of this world again, isn't it? How can I work as little as possible and get as much as possible?

That's the nature of our world. How can I get as much as possible with as little work? Well you see, a citizen of heaven, one of God's new humanity that he is creating in Christ Jesus, thinks the opposite.

Not how can I work as little as possible to get as much as possible, but rather how can I work more so that I can give away as much as possible? That's how a citizen of heaven must learn to think about their work and their possessions.

But that's not the way we naturally think, is it? We worry about money. And all the money we get we want to save and store up and keep for ourselves because we worry about money.

[25 : 43] Our lack of generosity is actually a lack of faith in God. If you're not generous, it means that you're not trusting God. But God is calling us to trust in Him enough to give our money away.

That's how He calls His people to live. That's one of the beautiful items of clothing that He gives us to wear, that we get to wear, the item of generosity. We get to be generous because we have a Father who will supply all our needs.

A person who does not have that relationship with God cannot be generous. They have to supply their own needs. They have to store up and hoard their wealth. But we don't have to.

God calls His people to be generous, to work harder, to give away more. And that's something we need to work on. Because if everyone in this church thought like that, well, we would have more people here because we'd be able to afford more staff, to do more ministry, to reach more people, to grow the church, and to have more of an impact in our community.

And so we must work on that. Generosity, because it's a vital part of the Christian outfit. Then next, and the last item of clothing I want to mention this morning, are the words we use when we talk to people.

[27 : 05] our words are also a very important item of Christian clothing. And it's such an important part of who we are, is how we speak.

Look at verse 29. It says, Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

A word here, unwholesome, when it talks about unwholesome talk, it literally means rotten, or corrupting, speech that isn't nutritious.

So you know, if you have a rotting piece of fruit in the fruit bowl, first thing you're not going to eat that, right? Because it's not going to do anything good for you. But secondly, it rots the other fruit, doesn't it?

If you keep it in the fruit bowl, that rot will spread. That corruption will spread to the other fruit, and eventually you'll have to just toss the whole lot in the bin. Well, you see, there's a kind of speech that corrupts a community of people.

[28 : 12] There's a kind of speech that if one person in the church does it, it spreads, and it corrupts other people's speech as well. Gossip.

Words spoken about people behind their back. Or snarky comments made to their face to make them feel small or stupid or guilty. You know what I'm talking about, don't you?

You've been a victim of it, haven't you? That kind of speech. You've been a perpetrator of it as well. Because when someone speaks to us like that, we respond in kind, and the rot spreads.

Well, that is totally inappropriate for the citizens of heaven. We are to put off that kind of speech and then put on the opposite. So we don't just stop gossiping.

We don't just stop speaking badly about people. Because remember, if we just stop a bad habit, it's going to creep back in unless we have a good habit to replace it with. So what's the good habit of speech that we must replace corrupting speech with?

[29 : 18] Well, it's a kind of speech that is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit them. And we've got to work on that kind of speech.

It doesn't come naturally. The kind of speech that takes into account how people are feeling, where they're at, gives them grace, and deliberately finds things to say to them that will make them feel better and build them up and encourage them, not make them feel small or guilty or inadequate, like we often do to boost our own pride.

No, a kind of speech, the kind of speech that citizens of heaven are called to, is a speech that removes the rot and corruption, and it's wholesome, and it always, it's words that when they go into someone's mind, they always do something good.

A kind of speech that this world is not used to, that you don't often hear, but it's a beautiful thing when it is heard. The world is longing for that kind of speech between human beings, but only people in Christ are those who are able to speak like that, truly.

We're the only ones who are able to speak with true grace because we're the only ones who have experienced true grace in the gospel of Jesus. And so will people hear that kind of speech in you this week?

[30 : 40] In the various people you rub shoulders with? What kind of speech is going to come out of your mouth? What is the nature of it? Are you in the office, in the classroom, in the home, deliberately looking for things to say to people that will make them feel loved and appreciated?

Is that a habit yet, or is that something you need to work on? When you see someone, does your mind automatically go, what can I say that's going to build them up today? I don't think that's how we naturally think.

But we must. We must reflect the grace of God. We must think, how can a person feel grace, undeserved favor, in what I say to them? Because the phrase translated in verse 29 here, that it may benefit those who listen, literally, you know what it literally says in the original, it says that it may give grace to those who hear.

Give grace. Is your speech such that those who hear it, taste the grace of God in it? Ask yourself. And so these are just some of the items of clothing that we get to put on as citizens of heaven.

And it's a striking and beautiful outfit that we get to wear day to day as we walk to the shops, as we visit people's homes, as we, whatever we do, as we go to work, we get to wear this outfit of a citizen of heaven. So that when people look at us and they see truth and peace and generosity and grace, they are so attracted to the Lord who gave us that outfit, that they want to know more.

[32 : 21] Where did you get that from? Why are you like that? You know, I always say it, I'm going to say it again, 1 Peter 3.15, one of the verses about sharing our faith, sharing the Lord Jesus Christ, says always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you for the hope that you have. Now Peter's doing something quite striking there when he says that he's assuming that Christians stand out in the world and people are going to come to you and ask you what makes you different. And it's your clothing, it's your lifestyle, it's the things that you put on that reflect who you are, that's going to stand out and that's going to cause people to ask questions. But there are other important reasons for making sure that we're always wearing this appropriate outfit for a citizen of heaven and we see them in verse 27 and verse 30, verses which I haven't looked at till now, but they're very important. Look at them in your Bibles, which I trust you have open in front of you because, well that's just a good habit to be in. Don't listen to the preacher because he says something, listen to him only so far as you see it in the Bible. Look at verse 27, this is reasons why we need to be wearing this clothing, and do not give the devil a foothold. And then verse 30, and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed on the day of redemption.

So that's what will happen if we fail to dress appropriately, right? If we fail to put off the old clothes of worldly living and what we do then, if we fail to get rid of those clothes, is we give the devil a foothold. A way to keep clinging to us and drawing us away from God and making it really hard to live the Christian life. And the devil stays there, that's what he does. He is adamant to take the people of God away from God and away from the holy, godly, beautiful lives that we're called to live. And if you don't get rid of your worldly clothing, your worldly lifestyle, then he will have a foothold. It's a great illustration, isn't that? A foothold. You imagine a climber, a rock climber, a steep cliff, and he can only stay on the cliff if he has a foothold, if there's a gap in the rock that he can put his foot in. Well, so the devil can keep influencing you, can keep clinging to you only so far as you're wearing the clothes of the world, because those clothes give him footholds. But the clothes of heaven, they're too smooth for the devil to get a foothold. He slips right off you, if you make this the pattern of your life. But also, we're told the clothes of this world deeply grieve the Holy Spirit, who is working in your life to lead you heavenward. He's making these clothes for you to put on.

The Holy Spirit is working in you to give you this kind of clothing, generosity, grace in your speech, self-control, fruit of the Spirit.

All right, so the Holy Spirit is making, is this, is the seamstress, if you like. It's a bit irreverent. But the Holy Spirit is the person who makes these Christian clothes for you to wear, the clothes that Jesus died to enable you to have, the clothes that mark you out in this world as his, that should be an honor to put on. And so if you're passing up those clothes, if you're saying no thank you, and you're more comfortable with the dirty, stinking clothes you've been wearing all your life, the lifestyle of this world, well then how do you think that makes God feel? Who did all this to give you a brand new wardrobe? How does it make him feel when you don't dress in the beautiful new clothes that he's given you, but you prefer your rags?

And so this passage is challenging us to ask ourselves how we're dressing. Will you start dressing appropriately for who you are? If you're saved, if you're a child of God and a citizen of heaven, will you then take these verses seriously and put on these patterns of life to show the world who you really are? Well let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gospel of your son Jesus Christ that he came down to this world to give us new birth, to give us eternal life through taking our sins on the cross. We pray, Lord, that not only will you help us to realize who we truly are as believers in Christ, but help us now to put on the clothing, the lifestyles, the patterns of behavior which are appropriate for our identity in Christ, so that others may see and be drawn to

[37 : 21] Jesus and that you may be glorified. Help us with this, Lord. Help us not just to put off our bad habits, but to find the good and godly habits to replace them and empower us by your Holy Spirit to do what you call us to do, to obey these words in Jesus' name. Amen.