

☞ WWJD Series

So far, we've talked about the Character of Christlikeness and the Conduct of Christlikeness. To be more like Jesus, we need to become selfless, humble, and obedient. And, we are to be servants who trust God and live for righteousness.

☞ The Conditions of Christlikeness

Ephesians 4:17-32

We are hearing from the apostle Paul. However, before He was the apostle Paul he was the Pharisee Saul. He was a man who hated Jesus and His followers. In Acts 8 and 9 we find him taking followers of Jesus to court, prison and ultimately death. He hated Jesus' teachings and people. But now we come to Ephesians 4 and Saul is now Paul who met Jesus on the road to Damascus. He has been radically transformed. The Holy Spirit changed him from hostile to humble, from murderer to minister, from killing disciples to loving and teaching them. When we understand Paul's radical transformation by encountering the resurrected Jesus Christ, we can better accept and apply his teaching of putting off the old and putting on the new life. This however, isn't simply about dry rules and responsibilities. If we ignore this putting off of the old and putting on the new we're setting ourselves up for failure. When God reveals His desire for our life it only becomes a reality when we abandon our own desires in exchange for His.

Ungodliness comes naturally to us... Christlikeness is not natural... Therefore, we must come to know Christ and learn his ways. Christlikeness effects all areas of the Christian life... Humility and Holiness; Faithfulness and Forgiveness; Evangelism and Empathy; Love and Long-suffering.

This is a high calling; Not for wimps. Some aspects of Christlikeness seem passive & weak, but they're really meek and powerful. It's not easy to be Christlike... It extends to every aspect of your life. It's more than just a code of ethics or standards of behavior, it's about who you are at the core.

We are called to be like God in true righteousness & holiness. (v. 24) So, how do we meet the conditions of Christlikeness?

1. ☞ Put off your old self (v.22)

The old self... some may have a very dark past. Others, not so much. But in reality, all of us have a past that was separated from God.

☞ The old was **Confused** (futility of thinking) = emptiness; without purpose

This is the illusion that living a life of sin and self-absorption can bring satisfaction. Some of you have tried. When you try to satisfy your longing with temporary things you get temporary satisfaction. Sex, food, drugs, power, money always leave you empty; you need more. It takes eternity and infinity to fill the human heart. The search for satisfaction of the heart, the mind, will, emotions and desires is futile if you look anywhere other than God.

☞ The old was a **Closed mind** – separated from the life of God

This is an unwillingness to look at truth and acknowledge it. Romans 1 and 2 make it clear that people know there is a God but don't acknowledge and accept Him or give thanks to Him. There is a knowledge that there is a creator or a force, or something that caused the universe to be but there is no relationship with God. The word ignorance comes from a Greek word where we get agnostic. It means without knowledge. Those that celebrate being agnostic are really saying they are without knowledge of God.

☞ The old was a **Corrupted life**

This is the lifestyle that instead of controlling the desires, the desires control you and become the only direction. We see this in our culture. It's having the mentality that everything is acceptable; there is no right or wrong. We see it in people taking freedom in abortion, adultery, premarital sex, lying, cheating, stealing, gossip, gluttony, addiction, abuse, etc. It is the absence of moral restraint and discipline.

☞ The old was a **Calloused heart**

“hardening of their hearts; having lost all sensitivity.”

It is an inability and unwillingness to respond to God's truth.

Our society and world today are always trying to find ways to distort or even deny the truth. A few years ago, a major Multinational company was looking for a new Marketing Director. A mathematician, a statistician and a solicitor entered the final selection process. The first to be interviewed was the mathematician and the Managing Director asked him a simple question: What is 2+2. The mathematician was surprised, thought about it for a bit, wondered if it might be a trick question and then simply answered 4. The Managing Director looked at the Board, shook his head and thanked him for coming, but he wasn't the candidate they were looking for. The statistician was the next in and the Managing Director asked him the simple question: What is 2+2. He paused, thought about it for a bit and then replied that statistically it was a number between 3 and 5. The Managing

Director smiled and Board was quite impressed. The candidate was thanked and ushered out. The last candidate, the solicitor was next and the Managing Director asked him the simple question: What is 2+2. Without batting an eyelid he replied: "What do you want it to be". And was promptly hired on the spot.

Be careful. If you ignore or continuously disobey God you will move to a point of no return. Your heart can become hard and unresponsive to God. The more you move away from God the harder the heart becomes.

Separate yourself from fellowship with the world, or the world will separate you from fellowship with God.

☞ So what is the solution? **Abandon the old life.** Adopt and accept the new standard. Verses 25-27 paint a clear picture of the patterns that are to be abandoned... Falsehood, anger, stealing, unwholesome talk, bitterness, rage, brawling, slander, malice, unforgiveness.

It's been said, "We are in the world but we are not of the world." A boat in water can be pleasurable, constructive and useful. But too much water in the boat and you got big problems! The Christian in the world is there to make a difference! But too much of the world in the Christian and you got big problems!

--Oswald Chambers... Sin is not weakness, it is not a disease; it is red-handed rebellion against God and the magnitude of that rebellion is expressed by Calvary.

1 Peter 1:14

do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world

--Billy Sunday... One reason sin flourishes is that it is treated like a cream puff instead of a rattlesnake.

We need to see our sin for what it really is... a barrier between us and God. It's like corrosion on battery posts. It's like a corrupted computer file. It's like cancer in the bones.

To forsake sin is to leave it without any thought of returning to it again.

Lord of the Rings – the ring corrupts; get rid of ring!

2. 📖 Put on the new self

Believers are to adopt a surrendered spiritual life. You didn't learn about Jesus by living according to the patterns of your self-centered, ungodly lifestyle. You learned about the truth in Jesus. Because of that you changed your moral, ethical and relational standards. In your relationship with Jesus the old standards aren't adequate. You need a whole new you.

📖 Verse 20 speaks about knowing Christ... This is how **transformation really comes...** not by trying harder, but **by knowing Jesus more.**

2 Corinthians 3:18

we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory

If you keep falling back into your old ways, you need more of Jesus. More of Jesus means there will be a renewal of your thoughts and attitudes.

Romans 12:2

... but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Transformed = metamorphosis – change to something entirely new, like a butterfly; Hulk

Renewing = Renovation – clean; repair; rebuild

God doesn't just want to add Jesus to your life. He wants to make a whole new you.

Here are some practical ways to change your way of thinking...

📖 **Recognize the source of your thoughts and attitudes.** (2 Corinthians 2:10:5-6) If they are pure and holy and beautiful think on those!! If they are ugly and dirty abandon them.

The loudest ethical influences in our society are celebrities: singers, actors, athletes, and talk-show hosts. If we let them do our thinking for us we will lose our identity in Christ. We must learn to listen to wiser voices and to think for ourselves. We have to take conscious, deliberate care of our interior life. We have to turn up the volume on God, and turn down the volume on society and ourselves. We must take time to reflect and meditate and evaluate in order to make sure that we are dancing to God's rhythms.

📖 **Reckon your old nature crucified with Christ.** (Galatians 2:20)

Remember who you are!

☞ **Run from temptation.** (2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 6:18)

☞ **Remember transformation takes a lifetime.** (Philippians 2:12)

Transformation happens when we start choosing to listen to a different drummer. Now of course “putting off” and “putting on” is not as easy as changing CD’s. The key is to get close enough to Jesus to share headphones.

☞ **Rely on the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit comes along side us to reveal all truth. God also provides the Holy Spirit to seal and strengthen us against the spiritual foes we face. The Spirit empowers us to follow and live like Jesus. Every command Jesus gives, the Spirit enables us to live out. If you are not living under the standard that Jesus gives, then check your salvation or surrender to His Holy Spirit.

It’s all about becoming more and more like Christ.

Christianity is worth little if it doesn't change your life-style.

I heard about someone visiting a large city who saw a tramp and decided to help him. He noticed he was wearing a dirty old coat. It was ripped and fit only for the bin. So my friend offered the tramp his coat. The tramp took it but to my friends surprise. Instead of taking off the old coat and putting on the new, he just put the new coat straight on top of his old coat. Sadly, like that tramp too many Christians behave the same way: They want the new things of Christ, but don’t want to let go of the old things of self and sin.

When Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, they were officially free from their many years of servitude, but some of them went on living as if they were still slaves. The President’s proclamation gave them legal standing as free citizens. It was a done deal—they were no longer slaves. But, out of habit and way of thinking, many of these poor people still lived like slaves. So, they needed to live in accordance with the new facts. When they were tempted to think like a slave, they needed to say, “No, the truth is I am now a free man!” They needed to appropriate that truth into their daily experience. Live by the new standard!

☞ **Put off the old self**
Put on the new

Song - WWJD