

Romans 13:11–14 (Part III)

“Wake Up, Clean Up, Dress Up, Go Up”

Summary

Paul closes Romans 13 with a rapid-fire call to action. He urges believers to live with urgency because the return of Christ is nearer now than ever before. The Christian life is one of contrasts: awake vs. asleep, light vs. darkness, day vs. night. Paul commands us to:

1. Wake Up – Shake off lethargy, complacency, and apathy. Be spiritually alert and burdened for the lost.
2. Clean Up – Remove the “dirty clothes” of darkness. Live in sobriety, purity, and relational stability rather than in indulgence or strife.
3. Dress Up – Put on the armor of light and clothe yourself with Christ, embracing your spiritual identity.
4. Go Up – Live ready, because salvation is nearer than when we first believed. This season demands urgency, holiness, and hope.

Key Scriptures

- Romans 13:11–14
- Ephesians 5:18
- Proverbs 23:31–32
- Colossians 3:12–14
- Ephesians 6:10–18

Discussion Questions

1. Paul says, “The hour has come for you to wake from sleep.” What kinds of spiritual “sleep” threaten believers today?

Lethargy (weariness with little spiritual energy), complacency (false sense of security while ignoring danger), and apathy (indifference toward the lost).

2. Why is complacency in the Christian life so dangerous, and how can we guard against it?

It blinds us to our true condition and dulls our urgency for mission. We guard against it through prayer, staying in the Word, and actively serving others.

3. Paul says to “remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes.” What does this image teach us about sanctification?

It reminds us that sin is not to be managed but discarded. Just like dirty clothes, we must take off sinful habits and replace them with holiness through Christ.

4. Paul calls us to put on the “armor of light.” What does this look like in daily life?

Living with moral integrity, embracing our identity in Christ, standing in truth and righteousness, and displaying outwardly the inward transformation of the Spirit.

5. What “provisions for the flesh” do believers commonly make today, and how can we cut them off before they lead to sin?

Things like justifying questionable entertainment, unchecked thought patterns, or giving room to bitterness. We cut them off by guarding our minds, setting boundaries, and filling our lives with God’s Word and Spirit.

6. Paul ties this urgency to the return of Christ: “Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.” How should this perspective shape our priorities and choices?

It should make us live with urgency, invest in eternal things, prioritize holiness over compromise, and share the Gospel with boldness.

Family Spotlight

Object Lesson: Dirty Clothes vs. New Clothes

Bring two sets of clothes — one dirty and stained, one clean and fresh. Show kids how we wouldn’t keep wearing filthy clothes if we had clean ones waiting. In the same way, Paul tells us to take off sinful habits and “dress up” with Jesus’ presence.

Activity Idea: Have kids write down (or draw) one “dirty habit” they want to give to God (like lying, jealousy, or unkindness). Then let them crumple it up and throw it away. Afterward, pray together and thank Jesus for giving us His “clean clothes” of love, kindness, and forgiveness.

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- Why is complacency in the Christian life so dangerous, and how can we guard against it?
- Paul says to “remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes.” What does this image teach us about sanctification?
- Paul calls us to put on the “armor of light.” What does this look like in daily life?
- What “provisions for the flesh” do believers commonly make today, and how can we cut them off before they lead to sin?
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