


## Walking in the New Self

2025-10-26 – Ephesian 4:17-5:6

	<p>As we seek to walk worthy of our calling, we need to put off our old way of living that was defined by death and sin. Instead, we are called to recognize who we have become in Christ and to walk worthy of that calling by being imitators of God. This week, we will look at how we can live up to this calling as individuals and a community that seeks to walk in the love of Christ.</p>
---	--

Well, good morning. It's good to see you all this morning. If you've got your Bibles, I want to invite you to open to Ephesians Chapter 4, verse 17.

This morning, we are moving forward in the second half of the book of Ephesians, and if you were here last week, we talked about how we are called to walk worthy of the gospel. For the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul lays out all the things we have become in Christ. We were dead in our sins, yet we've been made alive through God's immeasurable power and through his immeasurable grace and by his immeasurable love for us. We are chosen children of God if we are believers. We have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and we have been reconciled to him. By grace, we have been saved. We are his masterpieces. If you're here today and you're a believer, those truths are true for you.

And we talked in the first half of this series about how in our own strength and reality, we are completely unworthy of all that Christ has done. But when we come to the second half of the book of Ephesians, Paul begins by saying, "Walk worthy of that which you could never achieve." Because through the work of Christ and through the work of the Holy Spirit, you are now a child of God, and you are now held to that standard. So live up to it.

If you were here last week, you remember we talked about the spiritual gifts. Because at the start of this, Paul doesn't just say, "Walk perfectly; figure it out." That would be very discouraging, right? If he said, "Do this perfectly; good luck." No. Instead, Paul talks about how in the church we have the spiritual gifts. And it's important to note, as we talked about last week—and I'm stressing last week because Ephesians 4 through 6 are just building blocks on top of one another—but after Paul talks about the spiritual gifts, he says each person has some gifts and each individual part of the body has something to contribute because we are all one body in Christ for all who believe. And we need one another. None of us has all of the gifts. None of us is able to do it alone. We need to lean on one another. We need to build one another up. That is what we are called to do.

And last week, I think it was a very positive message about using our gifts with one another, and at the end of last week, I hope you came away encouraged by the challenge of what we are called to do. But when we come to Ephesians 4:17, we now start to talk about the problem. Because if we're to walk worthy, we need our gifts; we need one another. We also need to recognize our sin. We need to recognize our failure and our struggles. And though we've been made alive in Christ, though for believers we've been redeemed by his blood, our sin is fully covered—God sees us as his children—the reality is we do not often look like his children in our own strength. In fact, we never look like his children in our own strength.

And so today, we're going to start to talk further about what it means to walk worthy, and as we do that today, we need to talk about how we should walk worthy, how we should put away our sin. And let me say something as we start: there is nothing worse than when you're doing something wrong, when someone gives you the advice, “Stop doing it that way.” Nothing worse. If you've ever been like using a tool and say your father-in-law says, “Why are you doing it that way?” Or you're scrubbing a pot and your wife says, “Why are you doing it that way? Stop doing it that way. You're doing it wrong.” Like, that's discouraging. And if they say that and walk away, it's even worse, right? Because then you're like, “Well, what do I do?”

It's even worse when you're wrestling with sin and you're vulnerable and you try and tell someone. Say you're like a 19-year-old and you're telling your small group leader at church—this didn't happen to me or anything—but you tell a small group leader about a sin you're struggling with and he kind of nods and says, “Well, stop doing that. All right, guys, let's pray.” And just moves on. There's nothing more devastating in the body of Christ than when we think the body of Christ will not help build us up and help us overcome our sin.

Today, we're going to look at practical things that we need to know in order to put off our old way of living, in order to put to death that sin that Christ has already put to death. Because there are ways to do it inside the body of Christ, and God has equipped us to do it through the Spirit and the body. But we need to understand how to do it, because if we don't, we're not going to follow through on it.

If you're here today and you are a believer and there is a sin you struggle with, I want to promise you, if it's a pattern of sin you've had a long time in your life, by the end of today, I'm going to name the simple thing you need to do to solve it. And then I want to acknowledge that even with that simple thing, what's going to happen is it's a lifetime to figure it out. I don't want to leave you today thinking there's a simple solution for the sin patterns in our life, but I also want to leave you hearing that there is a simple solution if we would just follow it. I know there's a challenge here; it's a paradox. But the reality of what Christ has done and the work of the Holy Spirit is that we are no longer slaves to sin. And our challenge as believers is to walk worthy of the calling we have in Christ, to walk worthy as those who know Jesus Christ, and that's what we're going to look at today.

Will you join me in prayer?

*Father in heaven, we thank you for this day. Father, we thank you that while we were dead in our sins and trespasses, while we were walking in darkness in this world, while we were children under wrath, by nature and by choice, you sent your Son. He died in our place. He rose and he ascended to heaven where he reigns with you. We thank you that through the work of the gospel, we who were dead, by your grace, by your mercy, and by your love, we have been saved. It is not a work that we could do, and let us never think that. But Father, for all who believe, we thank you that we can stand before you even today, covered by the blood of your Son, redeemed before you.*

*Father, I pray for any here who do not know you, that as we talk today about the reality that we cannot walk worthy in our own strength, I pray that they would hear the work of your Son and how he has enabled us to walk worthy and how his blood covers our sin. And for those of us who do believe, Lord, I pray that your Spirit would give us eyes to see and ears to hear what your word has to say. That if there are patterns in our life that need to be defeated, Lord, that you, through this message and through your Spirit, would give us just an understanding of how to do that and a confidence in what you are able to do.*

*I pray, Lord, that you would speak to me this morning and you would speak through me. These would be your words and not mine. And we thank you for the work of your Son. It is in the holy and precious name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*

### Walk worthy as one who knows Christ

Refuse to be a dead man walking

Well, we're talking today about **walking worthy as one who knows Christ**. And the first thing we're going to see in our passage is that we need to **refuse to be a dead man walking**. You need to, if you're a believer, you need to **refuse to be a dead man walking**.

Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thoughts. They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because[a] of the hardness of their hearts. They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity **with a desire for more and more**.

Ephesians 4:17-19 CSB

Now, what I mean by this is in Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul says, ***“You were dead in your sins. You were dead in your sins and trespasses in which you once walked.”*** Now that you are a believer, “I urge you to walk worthy.” Paul says in Ephesians 4:1. In verse 17, he comes back to who you were before. And he says, ***“Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord. You should no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their thoughts. They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts.”*** (Ephesians 4:17-18)

Paul here is repeating Ephesians 2:1-3, talking about the mind of those who are not saved. They are dead in their sins and trespasses; they can do nothing good for the glory of God because they are fully dead. They are darkened in their understanding; they are excluded from life in God. If you are here today and you are a believer, this was true of you before you were sealed by the Spirit. If you are here today and you are a non-believer, this is true of you now. We are dead in our sins outside of the work of Christ. There is no way around this. We are unable to do good on our own. We are unable to walk in a way that is good or has life outside of God.

From the moment in the garden when the woman and the man ate from the tree, we were dead in our sin. And it is only through the work of Christ that we can have life.

The passage goes on: ***“They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more.”*** (Ephesians 4:19)—and with these words, that last “with a desire for more and more,” in the Greek it just is ***“with greediness.”*** ***“They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.”***

And I think it's important for us to talk about greediness because part of the characteristic of those who are dead in their sins is they want more and more darkness. This is the law of diminishing returns, if you've ever heard that. What you get is never enough in this life. When we pursue the things of this world, we will never be satisfied. Those who are dead in their sin will never be satisfied in this life or the life to come. Those who are dead in their sins will become more and more sinful.

You go to places like Romans 1, where Paul, same author, he talks about how those who rebelled against God, God turned them over to their desires and they exchanged natural relations for unnatural. They took things that were wicked and did them in the open and celebrated them more and more. And that is the pattern of humanity until the Lord Jesus returns. This is what we should expect of the world for those who are outside the gospel. We should not be surprised that in their greed, they pursue more and more evil. We should be surprised when Christians do it.

Because if you are a follower of Jesus, greed should never be something that you are known for or known by. Because if you think you need more of anything to satisfy you, you have missed that the power and grace and love of God is immeasurable. He has richly poured on you far more than you could ever ask or imagine. We talked about coming to understand his love that fills us, and the reality is that love is immeasurable, which means God has given you more than you could ever need. Greed is unbecoming of Christians in every way because of what we have received in the gospel. You have far more than you could ever need.

But for those who walk in darkness, the greed will lead to more and more, and they will turn further and further away without the work of God and the work of the Holy Spirit turning them and bringing them back to life.

**Walk worthy as one who knows Christ**

Refuse to be a dead man walking

**Refuse to be a dead man walking.** If you are a believer, you should not look like what you looked like before you followed Christ. If you do, something is wrong.

If you're a believer who says, "Well, I became a believer. I said a prayer. I get to go to heaven. Now I can live however I want." You have missed the gospel in its entirety. You are called to walk worthy of what Christ has done, which means striving for something that we will never achieve in this life, but striving for it because it's good. As we recognize that the old way was death and as we walk in the new life we have in Christ, that old way of living should become less and less appealing.

I had COVID a little while ago—not today, I promise. And I use this illustration—a month ago, I had some tea. But COVID had messed up my taste buds. And I thought the tea was like moldy swamp water. And I didn't want it anymore. And then today I tried the tea again and it still tastes the same. And so now I know I thought the tea had gone moldy. It wasn't the tea; it was my taste buds.

But the more you walk in the life of Christ, those old things should taste more and more vile. We should love what God tells us is worth loving and we should hate what God tells us is worth hating. And we don't often use that terminology of "hate what God hates," but he commands us to hate what he hates. We are called to look more and more like Christ, to look at our old life and say, "That is not who I want to be anymore." If you are a believer, you are called to walk worthy, which means leaving that old life behind. You are not a dead man walking. Refuse to be one.

**Walk worthy as one who knows Christ**

Refuse to be a dead man walking

Recognize the renewal you have received

This brings us to the next point: **Recognize the renewal you have received.** As Paul keeps going, he starts to talk about who we have become in Christ.

But that is not how you came to know Christ, assuming you heard about him and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, to **take off** your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, to **be renewed** in the spirit of your minds, and to **put on** the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

Ephesians 4:20-24 CSB

**But that is not how you came to know Christ, assuming you heard about him and were taught by him as the truth is in Jesus. Take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.** (Ephesians 4:20-24) Paul here gives the picture of how to put our old life aside. We want to walk right before the Lord. We want to walk in the life we have in Christ. We want to walk worthy.

But that is not how you came to know Christ, assuming you heard about him and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus,

- **take off** your former way of life, *the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires*, to
- **be renewed** in the spirit of your minds, and to
- **put on** the new self, *the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.*

Ephesians 4:20-24 CSB

And if we're going to do that, we need to take seriously: we need to take off, we need to be renewed, and we need to put on the new self. These are the three commands that Paul gives here that helps us understand practically how to do this.

**Taking off your former way of life**—the imagery is taking off a garment or a robe. Paul says, before you were a believer, you dressed a certain way, you looked a certain way, you did certain things. Take all that off and put it aside. The imagery of “**take off your former way of life**” is tied to the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires. And the “**corrupted by deceitful desires**” is, you're following after sin continually. In your old way of living, when you become a believer, you realize how broken and fallen you were before. How distorted you were. And now, because you have new life in Christ, you no longer want to be that. So put it off. If you are a believer, put off that old way of living.

And then **be renewed in your minds**, because now you can see that that was the wrong way. That was selfish ambition and vain conceit. That was wickedness disguised. That was nothing good. And now that you see it as your mind is renewed, **put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness**. The, by the way, the imagery of “**the one created according to God's likeness**”—this isn't just the idea of you're made in the image of God. This is the idea of as you put on the new self, as you put on this new robe or garment or whatever the imagery is, you're to be an imitator of God. It's Ephesians 5:1. We're going to read that today. Look more and more like Christ. Put on that which makes you look like him. Put behind the old way of living. Put it to death. **Put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.**

Take off, be renewed, put on the new self. That's Paul's plan. You want to walk worthy? These are the three things you need to do. And remember this in light of Christian community and the spiritual gifts because I promise you can't do this on your own.

**Walk worthy as one who knows Christ**

Refuse to be a dead man walking

Recognize the renewal you have received

Put off what is dead and put on your new life in Christ

As we talk about this, we're saying **recognize the renewal you have received**. We're going to **refuse to be a dead man walking** and then we're going to **recognize the renewal you have received**.

Now, I started by saying there's nothing worse than impractical advice: "Hey, stop doing that." Paul here doesn't say, "Put off the old, put on the new; moving on." The rest of our passage today is going to be Paul giving examples of how to do this in practical ways because we're called to **put off what is dead and put on our new life in Christ**. And Paul doesn't just say, "Do this; don't just put off the old, be renewed, put on the new." He gives example after example in the passage.

Therefore, **putting away** lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, and don't give the devil an opportunity. Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 4:25-30 CSB

Ephesians 4:25-30 says this: "**Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger and don't give the devil an opportunity. Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands so that he has something to share with anyone in need. No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need so that it gives grace to those who hear. And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**"

Now in Ephesians 4:25-30, Paul gives five very practical ways to put off the old and put on the new. And I've got a chart for you here; it's in your bulletin as well.

	<b>Put off the old self....</b>	<b>Renewed and putting on the new life in Christ</b>	
	<b>The one who lies</b>	Speak the truth in love to all (especially members of the body)	

	The one controlled by their anger	Quickly resolve any reasons for your anger and reconcile	
	The one who steals	Work with your hands to contribute to the body	
	The foul mouthed	Speak the truth in love to all (especially members of the body)	
	The one who walks in a way that grieves the Spirit	Rest in the truth of the work the Spirit has done	

I don't know if you guys can read the red; I hope you can. I can't read it back there, and I knew I couldn't, and I still did it in red. Put off the old self; put on the new self. Paul gives these examples.

The first one he says is: ***“Therefore, put away lying; speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another.”*** (Ephesians 4:25) So the first thing Paul says is, if you're a person who lies, put it away; put it off. The Christian community is not a place where we lie to one another. We do not omit the truth, and we do not obscure the truth, and we do not outright lie to one another because in Christ we as the body are called to lift one another up, to challenge one another, and to speak the truth in love.

Now, even though in this passage it does not say “speak the truth in love,” Paul said it earlier in Ephesians 4, and all of this should be done inside the love of Christ. But putting off the old self is if you're lying to other believers, if you're not speaking the truth to other believers. And really, by the way, I'm going to talk about inside the body of Christ, but treat everyone in the world this way, because we shouldn't be truthful to one another and liars in the world. Let's not be fools. We should be consistent in our conduct as we seek to imitate Christ.

But the one who lies is to put that aside. And then they're to speak the truth in love to all, especially members of the body. Now, it's important to note here, Paul doesn't say, “Stop lying; the end.” Go from being a liar to someone who speaks the truth. It's such a small thing. But if you say, “Well, I'm not going to lie; I just won't say anything,” that's not good, right? Like if you go from—like if somebody, like let's say you think the sermon's terrible today, and in the past you would have come up and said, “Pastor Matt, great job,” and just lying through your teeth. Let's say now you start just, “I won't say anything to him.” You see, that's a problem. That's a problem because again, we're called to be a community that in the truth that we have in Christ, we should speak the truth to one another.

When you see someone struggling with someone, don't just say, “Oh, they're good.” Don't hide; don't obscure. Speak the truth, and in love. The goal of today is not for you to leave today, by the way, just railing on everyone, everything you see wrong with them. I want to make that clear. But the goal today is also that we're not cowards that avoid speaking truth because it's hard, because speaking the truth is hard sometimes. And Paul says we need to go from being those who lie and don't speak the truth to those who speak the truth in love.

The next one: ***putting off the old self***, Paul says, ***“Be angry and do not sin.”*** (Psalm 4:4; Ephesians 4:26) And that's a quote from Psalms, but it's in this passage. He says, ***“Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger and don't give the devil an opportunity.”*** (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Paul here says, the one who is controlled by their anger, take that off. And we need to be really, really clear here. It says, ***“Be angry.”*** And sometimes we think we're not allowed to be angry. But Paul says, ***“Be angry and do not sin.”*** This is Old and New Testament. Both say this. Anger itself is not a sin. Jesus flipped tables. Jesus rebuked people. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees. If we are unwilling to be angry at evil, we will become numb to evil. Being angry is not the problem. The problem is when we act out of our anger in sinful ways.

Inside the body of Christ, when you see a fellow brother or sister in Christ doing something that is wicked, you should be angry. But then what you do in that anger matters. When you're angry at another brother or sister in Christ, the imagery of ***“don't let the sun go down on your anger and don't give the devil an opportunity”***—that's imagery of resolve it quickly with them in a loving way. Don't make it worse. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, he talks about if your brother has something against you as you're going to offer a sacrifice, don't even offer it until you go and make it right. We are called to act rightly before one another. We are called when we're angry to talk. Don't let it fester; don't let it infect. Don't allow a simple problem that you're bothered by or angered by to become something that a month later you explode about. Because the longer it festers, the harder it is to dig it out. But again, it's got to be done in love. *All of these assume love.*

But I also want to tell you, brothers and sisters, when you see evil in the world, be angry. Because if you're not angry, you're becoming numb to it. That's a reality that I think sometimes isn't said often enough. There's somebody I know who preaches at a church somewhere far away from here that has no business preaching; they're disqualified for ministry. And every time I hear about it, I'm angry, and I pray. I don't have a way to speak into this person's life, but I at first felt guilty about how angry I was, and now I'm angry, and then I pray, and I pray that the Lord would reveal to the people at the church the problem, because I don't have an authority to go talk into that person's life or talk to that church.

But I tell you this, because if you're angry and you do nothing with it, it's gonna fester. And if you get angry and you say, “Well, I shouldn't be angry,” that's even worse if you're not processing it or doing something with it. Because there are times we see evil in the world that we need to take action. And there are times we see evil in the world where that action may just be praying to the Lord. But if we try and say, “I can't be angry,” we're falling short. Paul says, ***“Be angry and do not sin.”***

The next one: ***“Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands so that he has something to share with anyone in need.”*** (Ephesians 4:28)

I love this one. This is probably my favorite one in this passage. Let the one who uses their hands to steal use their hands productively to be ready to give to those in need. Let the one who goes from taking from others be ready to give to others. It's a full reversal, and the principle we've seen building—it comes to bear in this imagery of stealing because for the thief to go from being a thief using their hands to being someone using their hands for productive reasons to give to others is a full transformation.

It's not enough for the thief to just stop stealing because why are they stealing? The assumption in this passage is this isn't like George Clooney or like Ocean's Eleven or that kind of nonsense. This is someone stealing because they have need. To the thief who has need, go work for that need and be ready to give to others. Because if the thief just stops stealing and doesn't do something productive, they're going to need to steal again. And Paul is saying, leave behind that old way of living so thoroughly that when someone comes to you in need, you're ready to give them from what you have. It is a radical transformation. Let the thief become the opposite and be generous in it. Let the thief not just build up and start working and gaining finances for themselves and for their own, but be ready to give to others. Let the one who takes become generous with what they have that they have earned.

Paul, as he talks in this passage, is giving example after example of turning upside down the old way of living. We put off the old; we put on the new, and in Christ we become people who walk worthy of what he has called us to be. Put off the old self.

***“No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need so that it gives grace to those who hear.”*** (Ephesians 4:29)

Now, the “no foul language”—don't be foul-mouthed. Don't swear. Don't speak harshly to others. The language here is tied to how you belittle or put someone down. When I was younger, much younger, I used to really like using sarcasm to attack people. And I was a jerk about it. And you may all say, like, “Matt, you're not very funny, so how would that have worked?” But I used to use a lot of my brain power to think of how to say funny things that were very disparaging towards others. And I remember having a mentor who pointed out to me, he's like, “Why? Like, what's the point of this? Why, you know, you're not making yourself any better by putting them down.” And I remember being like, “People laugh when I do it.” And it's like, “But they also think you're a jerk.”

And the more I still remember that moment being one of those, and I started to think a little different. And I went through systems where I did better and did worse. But over time, I started to think, “I'm not going to put people down. I'm going to encourage. And I'm going to lift them up.” And I still, I think I still have clever jokes, but I point them at myself more often. And I also, when I try and lift people up, I try to do it in a way where we don't need to diminish anyone in it.

Christ did not diminish himself as he lifted and challenged and encouraged people. If we're to imitate him, our tongues—we should speak in the same way.

As we speak the truth in love, to go from someone who is foul-mouthed to someone who is lifting others up is one of the most beautiful imageries that we can have because you see somebody that goes from speaking in a way that is wicked and obscene to someone who is encouraging others. I've been in so many Bible studies in my life where a new believer comes in where the first few times they're in a Bible study, they just swear and it's like second nature to them. I don't know if you've ever had that experience. I can think of like 20 faces in my life of people who they became a believer. And the first time we sat down and talked, they're like, "Yeah, it used to be a bleep, but now I'm following the Lord." And they say that everyone in the group looks over at them and they're surprised. But then over time, you hear that same person as they grow in the Lord; they quit speaking that way and it leaves their mouth. And if it happens, it happens very rarely. And when it does, you see on them, they're like, "No, I don't want to speak that way." That's the transformation we're called to. And it's putting off the old; it's putting on the new.

The last one: ***"Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."*** (Ephesians 4:30)

Now with this last one, I want to just make sure this is very clear. If you're thinking, "Well, what does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit?" This last one is incredibly broad because this is about when we sin. This is about when we fall short. This is about when we walk in our sin, when we walk in our old way of living. Put that away and put on the new life. If you were sitting here thinking, "Well, I don't lie very often; I control my anger pretty well; I don't steal and I'm not foul-mouthed; I'm pretty good," I promise you you have other sin issues. We all have sin issues. And with this list, Paul is not giving a comprehensive list, but he's giving practical examples, and he's saying, "Don't do this anymore. Do this instead."

Don't sit at home doom scrolling or binge watching some show that you've seen 70 times and you're re-watching it and you can quote it and you re-watch it just because you have nothing else to do. You have new life in Christ. Walk worthy of that. And I want to say this practically because the key point in all of this is that when we put off the old, the reason we wind up falling back into our sin is because we don't put anything new on. This is the key of all of this.

If I could—if I could go back in time and tell my twenty-year-old self anything, it's "Hey, those things you're struggling with—it's not enough to just say 'don't do this.' You need to think, 'Here's what it looks like to do this in Christ.'" One of my favorite memories when I was discipling a young man—he was struggling with what he looked at on his phone. And he was telling me, he's like, "I got rid of all the apps, and I found this, and I got rid of all this." And over and over the pattern of failure in his life, he was saying, "No matter what I do, I just find myself back in the same places."

And I said, "Well, why do you need your phone?" He's like, "Are you kidding?" As I say this, some of you are probably thinking, "Pastor Matt, I could never get rid of my phone."

Well, one of the biggest issues for him was he was doing really well, but at night, at bedtime, he'd lay down, and he'd just scroll on his phone a bit, and he'd find himself just following patterns he didn't want to follow. And do you know what there is outside of cell phones? Alarm clocks. You may not know this, because you think a cell phone is the only alarm clock. But I remember the day he told me, he's like, "The Lord put it in my head to buy an alarm clock." And then he quit putting his phone in his room at night. And he said that was such a practical, simple thing. And when he went to bed, he'd just read a devotional or something instead of being on his phone.

If I can say the most practical thing to you is that if the way you do devotions and the way you do all of your spiritual things is on your cell phone, one of the most practical things you can do is have a physical Bible and to have books and other things to read that don't require you to have your phone out. Because when you're on your phone doing your devotion and you get a notification from work or you get a text from somebody and all of a sudden that's all you're thinking about, that's your fault that you're using your phone for that. It's not your phone's fault, okay? I say this with sincerity because sometimes we're like, "Well, that's where my Bible is." I was like, "No, that's a place that Bibles are, but you have other options for Bibles. If you don't have a Bible, find me after; we'll give you a Bible."

But the problem is, is we put off the old and we say, "Well, I need to be renewed in Christ," but we don't come all the way to putting on the new. The problem is we put off the old and we try and do it in secret as well. And we say, "Well, I'm struggling with this. I don't know what to do different, but I'm going to just get rid of this." This is where we need one another. We need the spiritual gifts, because when you struggle with something, you need to turn to others and say, "Hey, I'm struggling with this," and they can say, "Here's how I overcame it."

The putting off and putting on and being renewed in Christ is something that does not happen in a vacuum. If it did, none of you would have sin issues that you deal with. None of us would because we just figure it out. But that is not how the Christian walk works. You don't have all the gifts; I don't have all the gifts. We need one another. We need to put off the old; we need to put on the new.

Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

Ephesians 4:31-32 CSB

As Paul keeps going, he says: ***"Let all bitterness, anger, and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ."*** (Ephesians 4:31-32)

This is a much quicker list of put off the old; put on the new. Put off bitterness, anger, and wrath, shouting and slander—all of these things in this list Paul is saying this is not how you should be known as the community of Christ. If this is how you act amongst one another, put it off. Be kind; be compassionate; forgive one another. Recognize that you do this just as God also forgave you in Christ. As we put on the life we have in Christ, we take seriously that it is because of what Christ has done.

Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.

Ephesians 5:1-2 CSB

And here's where Paul hammers it home: ***“Be imitators of God,*** And these aren't small words. We talked last week; the idea of walking worthy is walking to the standard, being equal to what Christ has made you. That's a standard we can't live up to in our own strength. And we're called to be imitators of God, which means this balance of what we're called to—it's impossible in this life for us in our own strength. I'm not talking to you today about flipping a light switch and now you're perfect. None of us will walk perfectly in this life. It's simple: put off the old, be renewed, put on the new. But it is the journey of a lifetime. But we are called to look more and more like those who imitate God, like those who look like Christ.

***We are dearly loved children. We're called to walk in love as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.*** That's what we're called to walk in. That is the call for every believer. Do not settle for something less.

But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints. Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks. For know and recognize this: Every sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, who is an idolater, does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for God's wrath is coming on the disobedient because of these things.

Ephesians 5:3-6 CSB

Paul ends this portion with a warning: ***“But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints. Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks. For know and recognize this: every sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, who is an idolater, does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for because of these things God's wrath is coming on the disobedient because of these things.”*** (Ephesians 5:3-6)

With these words, Paul is giving a warning. If you're unwilling to put off the old way of living, it means your mind has not been renewed. I'm not trying to tell you, you can lose your salvation. I'm trying to tell you if you love the things of darkness, if it doesn't taste like swamp water after

you've been renewed in Christ, if you're not moving towards putting on who we are called to be, seeking to imitate God even as we fall short, and if you're comfortable in that sin, Paul is saying there's no room for that in the kingdom of God. And if you think you can live in that old way, it means you are darkened in your mind and you are not renewed in Christ. And what's coming for all who don't believe is eternal wrath. There's no way around this outside of through the work of Christ on the cross. If you are dead in your sin, you are dead in your sin outside the work of Christ on the cross, outside the grace of God. So do not think anything less than that and cry out to him.

**Walk worthy as one who knows Christ**

Refuse to be a dead man walking

Recognize the renewal you have received

Put off what is dead and put on your new life in Christ

So we're called to **walk worthy as one who knows Christ**. That means believers **refuse to be dead men walking**. Don't walk in your old way of living. **Recognize the renewal you have received** and **put off what is dead and put on your new life in Christ**.

As we seek to do this, I want to encourage you: this is where the Christian community, when we are humble and when we are seeking to use our gifts, it is the most wonderful thing. A brother in Christ a few weeks ago said to me, "Hey, Pastor Matt, do you ever yell at your kids?" And I was like, "Of course not. My kids are perfect in every way." No. But he was asking me because he said, "You know, I'm kind of bothered. I've noticed I'm doing it more often." And so we're both talking there, and then he says, "Hey, I talked to so-and-so and here's some advice they gave me." And I listened to that advice and I went, "I needed that too." And it was a blessing because my kids are mostly perfect, but not always perfect. But it was a good reminder. And I started to think about, all right, put off the me who gets grumpy at my kids when I get home from work and I'm like, "Guys, listen and do stuff," and put on the—how am I gonna hold them to a high standard, hold them to do what is right, but in a gentler way, in a kinder way, in a firm way, because we're not gonna let them disobey, but how can I do that in a way where I take a step back? And it was just such a good reminder for me.

Inside the body of Christ, we are called to talk to one another about our struggles, called to talk to one another, because the most beautiful thing is when you say, "I'm trying to put this thing off, but it keeps coming back on." When you talk to someone else and they tell you, "Well, I used to have that on too. And here's how I got to the point where I put on the new life in Christ." That's what we need from one another.

I know of so many examples in my life and the lives of others of people who keep putting something off only to fall into it again and again because they never get all the way to that put on

stage. I think about—I could give a million examples of this—of people who are like, “Hey, I’m binge watching too much TV, so I canceled my Netflix account.” And now I’m just streaming YouTube all the time. And we can joke about it, and then we’re also all uncomfortable. It’s like, “Well, I stopped that, so now it’s podcasts.” And then I stopped that, so it’s audiobooks. And again, you can say, “Well, some of these on a tier are better than others,” but the real question is what are you putting on in your new life in Christ? Because I’m not here to tell you whether or not you should watch TV or whether or not you should listen to podcasts or those things, but what I’m here to say is there are things we know that we do to be lazy and to be wicked and that are not walking in our new life. And there’s a way to walk in the new life and there’s a way to not walk in it. And we need to put off that old way of living.

And in order to put it off and to leave it off and whatever sins it is, you need to think about what you’re going to put on. Young men—and men in general—if you’re struggling with pornography, I want to tell you part of the issue you need to figure out is not just, “I know I shouldn’t watch this.” You need to get to the point where you know what you’re going to do instead. That is, 20-year-old me needed that message so badly. We need to figure out not just how to get rid of something, but what we’re going to replace it with or what we do.

It’s Matthew 12 where Jesus talks about for the one who the demons driven out of the home and then the home swept and made better and then 7 demons come in because it’s still empty. This reality is something that if we just say, “I’m gonna stop; I’m gonna stop,” but we never think about what we’re gonna put on in Christ, we fall short and we fail and we think that the Holy Spirit is not up to the task of transforming us and we grieve the Holy Spirit because we don’t see that the Spirit has given us everything we need within the body of Christ.

We need to get all the way to putting on the new. If we don’t get all the way to putting on the new, we shouldn’t be surprised when we find ourselves in the same pattern again and again. If you think, “I’m still in the same pit I was in,” it’s because you haven’t thought about what it’s like to be outside the pit. This is so important.

Paul in this passage is not saying, “Walk worthy; figure it out.” Paul is saying if you want to walk worthy, put off that old way of living and put on what it looks like to walk in Christ. I can’t tell you each and everything you need to figure out how to struggle with today. It would take far too long for us to go through each thing that we might struggle with. But what I can tell you is the thing in your head right now that you’re like, “This is the struggle that I find myself always coming back to.” That’s the one to talk to someone about, and that’s the one to start thinking, “What am I going to do on the other side? I’m going to put this off, and what am I going to do to replace it? What am I going to put there that is in the new life I have in Christ?” That’s how we’re called to walk.

When we stop short of that, we shouldn't be surprised when we look like our old selves. But you, through the work of Christ, through his immeasurable power and grace and love, you are not a slave to that sin. You are dead no longer. Walk in the new life of Christ. Imitate God.

Let's pray.

*Father in heaven, we thank God that you do not leave us where we are at. We thank you that, for all who believe, through the work of your Son and the work of your Spirit, we can put on the new life we have in Christ. We thank you that what you have made us, it is possible for us to walk in because of what you have done. And Father, we confess where we fall short, because we either love the old way of living, or, as we seek to put it off, we do not seek to put on what is good and righteous in your sight. Father, I pray that, for those who are here who are believers, that today, whatever sin it is that they feel like they cannot overcome or that they struggle with again and again, I pray, Lord, that your Spirit would be opening their eyes; that in the conversations they have this week with other believers, you would nudge them and move them and help them to see clearly what it looks like to put on the new life we have in Christ.*

*And Father, I pray for those who are non-believers who are here. That for those who, as they listen to this, think, "I'm not worthy of any of this," or those who think, "Well, I don't even know what they're talking about." Lord, I pray you would open their eyes to the death that we all face outside of you. I pray you would open their minds to understand; that you would help them to realize what they need to put off, and that through your grace and mercy and power and love, they would come to know you and be your children.*

*Father, we thank you that you do not leave us where we are at, for all who call upon your name. And we thank you, Father, that you have chosen us from before the foundation of the world. We praise you that we are redeemed by the blood of your Son, and it is in the holy and precious name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*



Digging Deeper – **Walking in the New Self**– Ephesians 4:17-5:6

1. What stood out to you from the sermon?

**Read Ephesians 4:17-5:6**

2. What stands out to you as you read through the passage?

This week's digging deeper questions require a different kind of reflection and discussion than normal. Paul talks in this passage about things we need to put off (our old way of life), put on (our new life), and focus on (who we have become in Christ). A key idea in the passage is that: If someone is guilty of being a thief, they should go from taking things with their hands to using their hands to produce things to be ready to share with others.

For applying this idea today, here is a question: Are you guilty of being a thief within the church? Are you someone who constantly consumes from the gifts of others without using your gifts for the benefit of the body? What steps do you need to take to go from someone who only takes from the gifts of others in order to become someone who uses their gifts for the benefit of others?

Another example: Are you someone who avoids gossip? What would it look like to be someone who rejects to spread gossip and to become someone who lifts up others in the body?

The key application of this week is that if we want to walk worthy of our calling, we need to identify the areas of our lives where we walk in sinful patterns, recognize who we are in Christ, and walk as those who are children of God. For your group time, instead of answering questions as a group, take time individually to look through:

Where are the areas of your life that you walk in an unworthy manner?

Where do you see patterned areas of walking in sin?

What would it look like to replace those unworthy patterns with faithfully walking in light of who you are in Christ?

After you answer the above three questions, share what you come up with in your group. Ask those in your group if they see the same pattern and whether or not they agree with your plan. Let the group help you to see any blind spots and help you to walk in the light.

Take some time to end in prayer by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another. Pray specifically for what you have shared. Pray for those who are dead in their sin and are headed for the wrath of God, that the Lord would open their eyes. Pray for revival in our church.