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HOW THE CHRISTIAN IS TO PUT OFF THE OLD SIN NATURE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 43
EPHESIANS 4:22-23

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EPHESIANS 4:22-23 "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;"

Sin causes scar tissue to form in the soul and will fill the soul with darkness unless light is fed into the soul. Darkness will take over the life unless the light of the truth of the gospel fills the mind. The structure which gives your life peace and love and light and contentment is the structure erected by the deposit of doctrine in the soul. "That" introduces a purpose clause. Ye "put off" is an aorist, middle infinitive of "apotithemi." "Tithemi" means to place, and "apo" means from the ultimate source of yourself. In Attic Greek this word meant to take off your clothes, to get rid of something, to put away something. Here it means for something that has been in control to lose control. The aorist tense means the point of time when you make the decision to put away darkness in your soul and life. Middle voice means that you will be greatly benefitted by such action. The infinitive means that this is the purpose of God for you. The word here translated "concerning" is "kata" and it means according to a norm or standard of something, and should be translated here "according to your former way of life." The "former conversation" means your former way of life, the way of life you followed when you were an unbeliever.

As unbelievers, people go in various directions. Some become religious, and some become self-righteous, and some become immoral and some become very moral and sincere. You see, we have all kinds of unbelievers and a pattern of life is set for each unbeliever as the old sin nature takes over. When a believer gets out of fellowship and is carnal, he reverts to his old ways that dominated him when he was an unbeliever. A believer can become self-righteous, religious, immoral or moral. In other words, when the believer is under the control of the old sin nature, he imitates the unbeliever. In this verse this is called "the former manne of life." The believer under the control of the old sin nature imitates the unbeliever and he lives as though he had not accepted Christ at all. This leaves the Holy Spirit quenched and grieved in his life.

The New Life Of The Believer

When a believer moves out from under the control of the old sin nature and begins to imitate God, his conduct and life is just the opposite of the conduct and life of the unbeliever. It is God's plan for the life of the believer that the old sin nature be brought under control. The believer can accomplish this by relying upon the power of God the Holy Spirit generates within him. In Ephesians 5:1, we will take up the imitation of God, which results in the production of divine good. Here in this passage we have the imitation of the unbeliever which results in human good.

The process we call "REBOUND"

The way to put off the "old man" is through the rebound technique. The principle of rebound, the mechanics of rebound, is found in 1 John 1:9. We name, we site the sins we have committed. But remember, these sins were judged at the cross and when once we confess them, they are

at once forgiven, removed and forgotten. It is almost too good to be true, but the passage says, "He is faithful and just to forgive us." He even does more than this. When we confess our known sins, God forgives them, and then as a bonus he goes on farther and forgives us of all our unknown sins as well. So through rebound we are back in fellowship, and in this position we can be filled with the Spirit, and this is the way we can produce divine good. The old sin nature loses control and can no longer throttle soul breathing.

Illustration: Last week we studied about the IRC, which we called the Involuntary Respiration Center. Suppose a tumor were to attack the IRC. This would cut off breathing and the result would be physical death. This is what sin does to the soul and thereby spiritual death is the result. Sin attacks the IRC of the soul and spiritual breathing is thereby cut off.

The only way this process can be reversed is through confession and rebound. The words "Put off the old man" refer to rebound, the process by which we get back in fellowship. The whole phrase here is "put off the old man according to the former conversation." The "old man" refers to the old sin nature and is so called because Adam acquired this nature when he sinned in the Garden of Eden through negative volition. God did not create the old sin nature, for God is not the author of sin. Neither does God ever solicit to sin, as the scripture states in the Book of James. The old sin nature came into existence within man himself, apart from God. So, in a very real sense, man created his own old sin nature. Since Adam, far back there brought it in, it is called the old man.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE OLD SIN NATURE CATEGORICALLY STATED
(Every member of the human race has an old sin nature)

1. THE OLD SIN NATURE IS THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL DEATH.

ROMANS 5:12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"

EPHESIANS 2:1 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;"

The woman was deceived, but she received the old sin nature just the same. Adam sinned deliberately and that is why the old sin nature is passed down through the seed of the man and not the woman. At the moment Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they became spiritually dead. This was not physical death, but spiritual death. The one sin that produced the old sin nature was the sin of negative volition. "The wages of sin is death" refers to spiritual death, not physical death. Spiritual death means no fellowship with God. Ever since the moment when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, ever since that moment, every person born into the world comes into the world with an old sin nature. Many people falsely believe that you become a sinner when you commit your first sin. That is not true. You commit your first sin because you have an old sin nature, and you have this old sin nature within you at the moment of birth. The moment you are born into the physical world, that is the moment when you possess an old sin nature. "The wages of sin" is the pay-off of the old sin nature. Personal sin is the result of possessing an

old sin nature. Adam and Eve sinned on their own, with their volition they chose to disobey God. We are sinners because we are born with an old sin nature. So we are born physically alive but spiritually dead.

2. THE OLD SIN NATURE IS PERPETUATED IN THE HUMAN RACE THROUGH PHYSICAL BIRTH.

PSALM 51:5 "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

1 TIMOTHY 2:13-14 "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

3. THE BELIEVER CONTINUES TO HAVE AN OLD SIN NATURE AFTER CONVERSION.

1 JOHN 1:8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

1 CORINTHIANS 3:1 "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." We Christians have the Holy Spirit in us and we are in Christ, but we also have the old sin nature within us.

4. THE BELIEVER UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE OLD SIN NATURE IS DESIGNATED AS CARNAL.

When the Holy Spirit controls the life, the believer is said to be filled with the Spirit. This is called "walking in the light." When the old sin nature controls the life the believer is said to be carnal and is out from under the control of the Holy Spirit.

5. THE OLD SIN NATURE FRUSTRATES BONA FIDE PRODUCTION IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

ROMANS 7:15 "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not: but what I hate, that do I."

The Christian is supposed to produce divine good, but the old sin nature frustrates this production and causes the believer to produce human good. All you can produce when the old sin nature is in control is human good. You can't even get any results in your prayers when the old sin nature is in control. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

Even prayers, even your zealous, sincere prayers become human good if you have unconfessed sins and are out of fellowship with God. This means that with unconfessed sins in your life, you pray under the control of the old sin nature and those prayers don't get any higher than your head.

6. THE OLD SIN NATURE IS CALLED MANY DIFFERENT THINGS IN SCRIPTURE.

a. The flesh.

GALATIANS 5:16 "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

b. The old man.

EPHESIANS 4:22 "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;"

COLOSSIANS 3:9 "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;"

c. Carnal.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-3 "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

ROMANS 7:14 "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."

d. Sin in the singular almost always refers to the old sin nature.

ROMANS 5:12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"

1 JOHN 1:8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

1 CORINTHIANS 15:56 "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."

e. The word "heart" is often used for the old sin nature.

Heart is used often for the mentality of the soul, the thinking of the soul. "The fool has said in his heart (his mind) there is no God." Heart is a synonym for mind. Heart is used in Scripture for the breathing apparatus of the soul.

JEREMIAH 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

MATTHEW 15:19 "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:"

There are two ways the word "heart" is not used. It is never used in Scripture for emotion, never. Heart is not used in the New Testament to represent the cardio-vascular system. Repeat, it is never used that way in the New Testament. In modern English, we use the word heart in this way and we use it this way on Valentine's Day, but it is never used this way in the New Testament, never.

7. THE OLD SIN NATURE NOT ONLY HAS NOMENCLATURE BUT IT ALSO HAS ESSENCE.

ROMANS 6:6 "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

It has an area of weakness which produces sins.

HEBREWS 12:1 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"

It has an area of strength which produces human good.

ROMANS 8:8 "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

It also has a lust pattern.

ROMANS 7:7 "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

3. THE SOLUTION TO THE OLD SIN NATURE.

Christ went to the cross and the old sin nature of man was judged. Christ on the cross rejected human good and judged our sins.

Now, while we live on this earth, the old sin nature is judged by rebound. In the future the old sin nature of all believers will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ and there all human good will be burned. The unbeliever, the one who does not believe, carries all his human good with him to the great white judgment throne and he and his human good will be thrown into the lake of fire forever.

So the old man is still there. It is just like the lover standing at the door with a handfull of red roses, but she keeps on saying, "No, I don't love you. Go away." But he keeps on standing there, just keeps on hanging around. And that's the way it is with the old sin nature. The old sin nature is still there, hanging around after you are converted. You can't transplant it or perform an operation and remove it. Each person has his own and will have it until death. So the words "put off" really mean that you put away the power of the old sin nature by being filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit stands there to protect you and will not desert you, but the old sin nature stands there with the red roses, ready to date you any time you will give him a hearing.

Then this passage says that the old sin nature is "corrupt" and the word is a present, passive, participle of "phtheiro." This was the favorite word of the Greeks because the Barbarians couldn't pronounce it. This was one of their favorite passwords, and since the Barbarians couldn't pronounce it, they could detect who the Barbarians were when they tried to say it. It means to be depraved. It is the strongest Greek word for depravity. It means to be totally depraved. The present tense means that the old sin nature is always depraved. The passive voice means that the old sin nature receives its depravity from its own impetus, its own human good and its own lust. The participle means that this is always the nature of the old sin nature. So the old sin nature is constantly depraved. The old sin nature receives this depravity from something within its own nature and that something is lust. So the old sin nature with the production of lust is constantly depraved.

These many lusts of the old sin nature become the activator of the old sin nature and the motivator of the one who is controlled by the old sin nature.

A believer out of fellowship and the unbeliever are both controlled by the old sin nature and the lust patterns therein. The word for deceitful here is "apates" and this is deceit that leads to delusion.

The only way for the believer to break out from under the control of the old sin nature is by confession and rebound.

EPHESIANS 4:23 "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;"
This verse really says, "Receive restoration by the breathing of your mind." Next time we will study the "breathing of your mind."

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