

THE BIG IDEA CURRICULUM

Sermon: Putting on – Putting Off

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Small Group Study for Week of November 29 – December 5, 2008

The Big Idea: *“Putting on the armour of God”* is part of maintaining this new experience. For the armour to work at protecting our minds we need to let God help us to take off the parts of the old self that get in the way of us being able to stand against the devils schemes (Eph 6:12). Instead of standing against these schemes we often fall, because we actually are using our own armour, or “coping strategies”, that are not of God.

Overview:

Paul is using the metaphor of putting on the armour of God to illustrate the statement: “Be strong in the Lord, and His mighty power,” (Eph. 6:10 TNIV).

While reading through the description of the armour, one gets the picture of what Paul is trying to say. But how do we apply the armour to our lives in practical terms? What does it mean to “put on the amour of God?” The armour is a metaphor describing Gods protection of our minds against the temptations and life struggles we all experience.

In this sermon we studied Ephesians 4:17-25. In these texts we get a “before” and “after” picture of the Christian experience.

Old Self (Life before learning about Jesus)	New Self (Life in the Christian walk)
Living as Gentiles Futility of thinking Darkened in their understanding Separated from the life of God Loss of sensitivity Handing themselves over to sensuality Indulging in impurity and greed	Learning About Jesus To put off the old self Being made new in the attitude of our minds Put on the new self created in the image of God

Group - Read Eph 4:17-25

Questions:

1. Is this an extreme description of the old self or is Paul just getting a bit carried away?
2. What about someone who has grown up in the church - do they need to have a renewed mind? For that matter does this count for them at all?
3. Is the renewing of the mind a once off experience or is a part of our Christian walk.

Group - Read Jeremiah 17:9-11

Question:

1. Does this add to what Paul is trying to say about the above text?

Group - Read Ephesians 2:1-10

Questions:

1. How does this connect to the last text?
2. Does this give us more information about “the putting on” of the armour of God?

Putting off (Eph. 4:22)	Putting on (Eph. 4:23,24)	Putting on (Eph. 6:10,11)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put off the old self which is being corrupted by it's deceitful desires 	Let our minds be renewed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put on the new self – created in the image of Christ 	Be strong in the Lord and His mighty power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put on the Armour of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the enemy

Group - Read Eph. 6:10-13 noting verse 12

Question:

1. Is it possible that these “schemes of the devil” are designed to trap us into going back to the “before learning about Christ identity” described in Ephesians 4:17-19? Look at the box above to see Paul’s progression of the theme – “Putting On.”
2. How can the weekly accountability part of our small group time help us to put off the parts of our old self that need to go?

Conclusion

The reality is - we need accountability. It is easy to deny the parts we don't like to see about ourselves. We would rather not go there. But no matter how difficult this process is, our minds are powerfully guarded against our old weaknesses when we deal with them. God has paid for everything when Jesus died on the cross. He has even paid for the things we don't want to see about ourselves. He wants to make us complete and spiritually strong to cope with life in a fallen world.

