

Read: Ephesians 4:17-24

Dressed for the Best

Ephesians 4:20-24

That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Bria was horrified! She couldn't believe it! She finally convinced her mom to go back-to-school shopping for new clothes. Most of her clothes didn't fit because she had grown over the summer. A lot of her shirts were worn out, and some even had holes in them. Bria got a pile of new clothes, and she was excited to look her best at school.

But how could this be! Here she was in the car on the way to her first day of school in her best and favorite new outfit, and she dropped her chocolate donut! Noooo! She was covered in chocolate stains. With tears in her eyes Bria pleaded to go back home. "Mom, they can't see me like this! I'm a mess!"

Not to worry! Super dad came to the rescue! Bria and her mom waited in the school parking lot as dad rushed from home with another brand-new outfit for Bria to wear. And suddenly, with a change of clothes came a change of attitude. Bria was happy again and excited for a great first day of school.

How dirty are you? How often do you walk around with stains for everyone to see? I'm not talking about spilling juice on your shirt or getting mud on your shoes. I'm talking about sin. How dirty are you from all the bad things you have done? How often do other people see you do what is wrong?

Today the apostle Paul reminds us that this not how we Christians are to live. This week's devotions have reminded us that God gives us many blessings—like food and clothing—but the best blessings come to us through Jesus himself. Jesus has washed us clean of every stain from our sins. He has given us a new life and clothed us with his own perfection and holiness. That's why Paul says we should "put off" our old sinful ways and "put on" the new self.

Just like Bria was happy and excited to wear the new outfit she changed into, so we can be happy and excited to live our new life in Jesus. Life with Jesus is filled with joy and peace and love. Life with Jesus is filled with the hope of life in heaven. Life with Jesus is different and

better. So follow Paul's advice. Get rid of your old sinful ways and put on your best outfit for everyone to see. Wear your faith in Jesus and let the light of Christ shine!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What makes us dirty in God's sight? Why?
- Who makes us clean in God's sight? How?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Explain how Jesus' forgiveness is like putting on new and clean clothing.
- When Christians live with their "new clothing" from Christ, how will they look different from other unbelievers in the world?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- The Bible tells us that we are clothed with Christ at our baptism (Galatians 3:27). What are ways that you can better remember your baptism when you were clothed with Christ?
- A friend comes to you and says, "I've really messed up and sinned badly. I feel so dirty." What would you say to that person?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, you have washed me clean with your own blood. You have dressed me in your own life and death. Now let me shine with the light of your love so that all can see. Amen.

Hymn: CW 402:1,3 – My Faith Looks Up to Thee

My faith looks up to thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine.
Now hear me while I pray; Take all my guilt away;
Oh, let me from this day Be wholly thine!

When ends life's transient dream, When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll,
Blest Savior, then, in love, Fear and distrust remove;
Oh, bear me safe above, A ransomed soul!