

We, as Christians, have a new life in Christ. A new life is not a re-treading of the old life, but a complete new start in Christ Jesus our Saviour. The Bible states, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17) When we get saved, God's Word states we are new people in Christ. This new life spoken of, is applicable whether you are eight or eighty years old. This new life in Christ deals in the saving of a person's soul, and consequently, saving a life from eternal death and earthly destruction because of bondage to sin. All mankind are born sinners. (Rom 3:23) From the time we are born physically, our our bodies grow, as well our minds and as a person.

We start to mold and formulate who we are very early. Some say that eighty percent of our personalities are formed before we are eight years old. This personality is our response to what is around us. During these impressionable years, we formulate how we act and react to problems and life experiences. Many times, being a pastor and observing and praying for many families, I see young children as mirrors of their families and homes. Often we can see much of the parents' personalities in the conduct of the children, in the way they talk, act, and react to situations.

Ninety percent of our actions and reactions (Natural responses) are developed during these years from eight to eighteen. Our personality is the foundation that will guide us in the forming of the natural man. Likewise, the sins we put in our lives between the ages of eight and eighteen are the sins typically we will struggle with the rest of our lives.

As we develop this person as the Bible calls the "old man", the Lord says, "that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful

lusts." (Ephesians 4:22) We are commanded to put him off and put on the new man. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephesians 4:24).

This act of putting off and putting on is a form of repentance. Webster defines repentance as "a change of mind, or a conversion from sin to God." (American Dictionary of the English Language Noah Webster, 1828) Likewise, it is a turning from sin to God, or in other words, from that which is wrong, to that which is right. (Acts 17:30) "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"

We live in a sinful world that feeds our sinful nature. The more we feed the old man the more he grows and the larger the contrast and entrapment into sin. If we get saved, we become a new creature. However, the old man still resides in our lives. Galatians 5:17 explains this theory, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

So when we are born again, we all come into the Christian life with baggage from our childhood and up to the point when you get saved. (The old man) Whether it be from our actions and reactions, or dealing with our parents or problems we faced in our adolescence. Our baggage could be the way our parents dealt with us or the way we dealt with authority. We develop a personality during these early years.

At the point we get saved, we have the new nature led by the Spirit of God. Even though Adam Clarke in his commentary says, “Here is certainly an allusion to the creation of man,” (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible By Adam Clarke, 1826) there is no allusion. But just like God can use a new physical life from birth, He, likewise, can give us a new spiritual life.

The old man is still in our life, but he is led by experience and feelings. We are commanded to put off this old man, and put on the new man. This transition should be an automatic response as we grow in the Lord. We learn to trust Him and lean upon Him and our commitment to the Lord only gets deeper and stronger.

As the new man grows up in Christ, he is being loved by His Heavenly Father. God is loving, affirming, accepting and always there for us. The old man loses his grip over our conduct. We begin to be in tune with the new rather than the old man. In our lives, we become men and women of character rather than of circumstances of our old lives. I love this quote, “Character, not circumstances, makes the man.” (Booker T Washington) Our character is who we are in Christ.

Unfortunately, we can choose to live in the old man rather than the new man. This will bring about no reality to our life in Christ. Addictions, attitudes, problems, and depressions that we had before we got saved will be evident in our lives because we are not guided by the new man. The Bible commands us in Ephesians 4:14, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;” We are to be spiritual adults, living for our Heavenly Father. (Galatians 4:6) “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

As a person told me one day, “Preacher that makes for good preaching, but hard living.”

He was correct. If we try to live in the flesh, and use our own power, it is hard living. If we do not have the power to save ourselves, we do not have the power and ability to sanctify ourselves, which means to set apart ourselves for the Lord. Putting off the old man and putting on the new man is the act of changing the compass of your actions. You act and react from your relationship with the Lord.

Too many people are trying to win the victory over the flesh by fighting for victory, but we as Christians are fighting from victory. Jesus has already won.

In conclusion, we are new in Christ, our old addictions and habits are not who we are now. The new man needs to be put on, and the old man cast off. Just like when you get a new pair of shoes. There is usually a need for new shoes, because the old ones do not work any longer, so you get a new pair and you throw away the old. Let us put on the new man and throw away the old man.