

Dr. Ernie Baker  
Professor of Biblical Counseling  
The Master's  
NANC certified Counselor

BCDASoCal Fall Conference Weekend 2 Hour 6

***How People grow and change (especially in the area of communication)***  
The Put Off; Be renewed in the mind; Put On process in Ephesians 4:17-32

Introduction:

When is a gossip/slanderer no longer a gossip/slanderer?  
When is a yeller no longer a yeller?  
When is a “clammer upper” no longer a “clammer upper”?

**Good communication from God’s perspective is sending a message that is holy, purposeful, clear, and timely. Dr. Stuart Scott**

**I. Learning God’s Word is foundational for change (20-21)**

- A. God’s Word challenges us to be different “You have not so....”  
Cf. 4:1—there is a changed heart when you become a believer.
  
- B. God’s Word is foundational because it teaches me to be a disciple of Jesus Christ (20-21)  
“Learner”= manthano
  
- C. God’s Word is foundational because it teaches me to focus on Christ  
“Christ”—He is the goal (cf. 1:3)  
Heb. 12:2
  
- D. This is the consistent teaching of the Word  
James 1:21-22  
Other verses  
Principle: Change will be no greater than your knowledge and acceptance of God’s Word

**II. We must make a decision to “put off” the old man knowing we have a new position in Christ (22).**

- A. Take decisive action—“Put off” (aorist).  
Cf. mortification—“put to death” Col. 3:5  
This means I must take personal responsibility
  
- B. What am I wanting to rid myself of?—“the old man”

Principle: God is in the business of change. I shouldn't talk like the "old man" if my heart has changed.

- C. Why should I rid myself? "it is being corrupted in accordance with lusts of deceit"  
Deceitful lusts—e.g. promise peace and happiness and relief but deliver sadness, grief, pain.

### **III. Change will take place as we are renewed in the spirit of our minds (23)**

- A. The action is renewal—new, mint condition, freshen up (2 Cor. 5:17)

- B. The timing—present tense, continual action (2 Cor. 4:16-18)

- C. The location—the spirit of the mind (the thinking, attitudes, desires of the inner person). This is equivalent to the "heart".
- Definitions of the heart
  - The "heart" has "thoughts" and "intentions"(Heb. 4:12).

Desires change/heart changes

Cf. Romans 12:1-2

- How the heart influences communication (Matt.12:33-34)

- It's really about worship –Matt.6:21

- D. The facilitators of the renewal

- Victory in Christ already—Romans 6 (cf. 2:8-10)
- The Word—John 8:31-32 (verse 32; "come to know")
- The Spirit-2 Cor.3:18 (writing the Law on our hearts—Jer. 31:33; Ezk. 36:25-27).
- Principle: True freedom comes from the continual study of and obedience to the Word of God as the Spirit applies it to our minds.

### **IV. The change can be complete by putting on the new man (24 [the new man is Christ, cf. Col. 3:10-11]).**

- A. Follow the process (follow the directions precisely—each step is crucial)

- Put off, be renewed, put on—new clothes do not fit well over old. New "armor" won't fit well over old clothes.

- Be renewed—can not skip it or else hypocrisy occurs (i.e. external change without internal change).
- Put on—can not stop with the other two or else you are not truly changed
- Usually this is the opposite of whatever the “put off” is and addresses heart motivations (remember the two great commandments)

Loving God:

Loving others:

B. This takes discipline with the correct internal motives (I Tim. 4:7).

- Delight before duty; the general flow of my life is one of desiring the Lord above all else even though there are times I give into the flesh.
- Perseverance realizing it is a process (I Cor. 9:24-27)

This life, therefore, is not righteousness but growth in righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it; the process is not yet finished but is going on. This is not the end but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory but all is being purified (Martin Luther).

- It is like killing weeds or killing a snake.

Jay Adams; “The Scriptures give the needed hope, directions, and goals, the Holy Spirit provides the power, and Christian discipline is the method.”

## **V. Examples of the whole process (25-32).**

A. Speaking truth (25)

B. Anger (26-27)

C. Stealing (28)

D. Unwholesome communication (29-30)

E. Bitterness, etc. (31-32).

Philip Keller; The Christian’s life is a dynamic demonstration of the divine and supernatural life of Christ Himself in the conduct and character of a common man or woman. It is the supernatural rebirth and recreation of a soul deep in darkness brought

into the life and light and love of God our Father. It is the wonder and beauty of a spirit once enslaved to sin but now set free to follow Christ in lifelong loyalty. It is the person who in strength and serenity is led daily by God's gracious Spirit in the paths of righteousness (page 80; *The High Cost of Holiness*).

## **VI. Four Principles of Communication based on verses 25-32.**

The Definition of Communication (Mack):

1. A process of sharing information with another person in such a way that the sender's message is understood in the way he intended it to be understood.
2. The art of conveying information and meaning in order to come to a common understanding.
3. A process of sharing information with another person in such a way that the people involved are mutually strengthened, enriched, and encouraged, and thus experience harmony, unity, and emotional closeness.

### **PRINCIPLE 1—Be honest (Eph. 4:25)**

#### a) Speak

(1) A Greek imperative (.ie., a command): "You speak"

(2) Why? People cannot read our minds.

(3) Clamming up is not an option for the Christian. This includes avoiding and evading.

#### b) Speak Truth.

(1) The verb is present tense—continuous action. (Also see Eph. 4:15; Col. 3:9)

(2) Honesty is more than not lying. Other examples of dishonesty include:

(a) Exaggeration

(b) Evasion

(c) Half-truth

#### c) Speak truth lovingly (Eph. 4:15)

1. Be concerned with what you say

2. Be concerned with how you say it.

3. Be concerned with how much you say.

4. Be concerned with when you say it.

d) Become a skilled listener (examples of listening and communication techniques)

1. Clarification

2. Reflection

### **PRINCIPLE 2—Keep current (vv. 26, 27)**

a) Failure in attempting to solve each day's problems quickly is sin. Don't carry them over into tomorrow. (See Matt. 6:34)

b) Failure to solve problems quickly:

(1) Opens way to resentment, hatred, and bitterness

(2) Distorts subsequent problems

(3) Endangers the sexual relationship

(4) Sets the stage for spiritual discouragement

c) Questions to ask before bringing up an issue:

1 Prov. 18:13,15

2 Prov. 27:6; Matt. 12:34b

3 Matt. 7:1-5

4 Eph. 4:15; Prov. 15:1

5 Prov. 15:23b; 25:11

6 Prov. 3:5; Phil. 4:6,7; I Thes. 5:17

d) Introduction to Peacemaker principles

### **PRINCIPLE 3—Attack the Problem, not the Person (vv. 29, 30).**

a) "Unwholesome word"

1) Words that will tear down

2) Words that bypass the conflict

3) Words that grieve the Holy Spirit

Principle in a question form: Will it move them down the path of sanctification?

b) Edifying words

1) Words that edify or build up

2) Words that deal with what the person says or does

3) Words that help reach a solution

c) The “PAUSE” principle

**PRINCIPLE 4—Act, Don’t React (vv. 31, 32).**

a) Reactions (v. 31)

1) Attitudes and actions that must be put off:

(a) Bitterness

(b) Wrath

(c) Anger

(d) Clamor

(e) Slander

(f) Malice

2) The natural tendency of our sin nature is to be defensive about dealing with our own sins (shift blame, run, react, etc.)

b) Actions (v. 32)

Principle: The “put ons” kill the “Put offs”(Romans 12: 21).

1) Attitudes and actions that must be put on:

a) Kindness

b) Tender-heartedness

c) Forgiveness

2) It is only through God’s Spirit that we can learn to be this way.

c) Conflicts are resolved when we act and don't react.

Conclusion:

Based upon what you have heard this weekend name five things you need to work on.

What are the top two things?

How will you work these?

When will you start?

Now—write a prayer of commitment to the Lord based upon what you just decided.

Recommended Resources:

-*The Exemplary Husband* by Stuart Scott

-*The Excellent Wife* by Martha Peace

-*War of Words* by Paul Tripp