

Introduction to Q2

Q2/Session 1

Introduction

As we begin this new quarter, we are shifting our focus from laying a personal foundation of discipleship to learning how to put it on display. Following Jesus is not only about what we know, it's about how His life is displayed through us. The world around us should be able to see Christ in the way we love, forgive, and treat others.

This quarter is called “Show” because discipleship is meant to be visible. Jesus not only taught His followers what it meant to follow Him, but He also showed them through His actions, His relationships, and the way He responded to people. In the same way, we are called to “put on” His character and let others see Him in us.

In the weeks ahead, we'll study the virtues in Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4, which describe this transformation as putting off the old self and putting on the new. Each class will focus on practical ways to develop a Christ-like character and demonstrate to the world what it means to belong to Him.

Although we are moving into a new theme of classes, we are not moving on from what we have learned so far; we are building upon it.

Let's dive in.

Diving In

We know that being a disciple means following Jesus and learning from Him. Jesus said that the world will know we are His disciples by our love for one another (**John 13:35**). Therefore, how we treat each other will reveal whether we are His disciples or not. We can have head knowledge about God, but if it is not lived out in our lives towards others, we will not be an example of a disciple to those around us.

As we have said many times so far, discipleship is not an individual life, but a life lived with others. The New Testament is filled with scriptures that teach us how to treat one another. If we are to grow in our discipleship and mature as believers, we must be intentional about how we treat the people around us.

Jesus' disciples saw how he treated them and others. They saw how He responded to people who came to Him, who interrupted Him, who were insensitive to Him, and even people who used Him and argued with Him. They learned from His actions and His words, and so should we.

In this quarter, our classes will be based on two primary scriptures.

Colossians 3:12-15 (NLT) *Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and*



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patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

This verse states that, since God has chosen you to be holy (or set apart) and He loves you, there are certain things that you must do. Paul uses the term “clothe yourselves” (most other translations say, “put on”). This is something that we do for ourselves; we are the ones who put on the virtues that follow this command. Paul says almost the same thing again in:

Ephesians 4:21–24 (NLT) *Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.*

In both Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3, Paul is teaching about putting off the old ways of living and putting on the new way of living. Of course, this is something that we can expect God to help us with, but we cannot expect Him to do it for us. We are the ones who put off and put on.

Some of the virtues in these passages may already come naturally to you, while others may be more challenging. Yet as disciples, we are called to cultivate all of them in our lives, just as Jesus' disciples did.

Recall from our class “What is Discipleship” how the Gospels portray the disciples. They had some things that they had to put off, but as they did, they became more and more like Jesus.

Colossians 3:10 (NLT) *Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.*

Romans 13:12, 14 (NLT) *The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.*

Galatians 3:27 (AMP) *For all of you who were baptized into Christ [into a spiritual union with the Christ, the Anointed] have clothed yourselves with Christ [that is, you have taken on His characteristics and values].*

These verses use the metaphor of clothing to illustrate the transformation/renewal that takes place in a believer's life. What can we learn from this illustration?



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1. **Intentional Action:** Just like changing clothes requires a conscious decision, so does removing sinful behaviors such as anger, malice, and gossip. Likewise, putting on virtues like kindness, humility, and patience requires deliberate effort.
2. **A Change in Identity:** Clothing often represents identity. By taking off the "old self" and putting on the "new self", we embrace a new identity in Christ, reflecting His character.
3. **Ongoing Process:** Just as we dress daily, the process of putting off sin and putting on righteousness is a continual practice. We must choose daily to clothe ourselves with Christlike attributes.
4. **A Visible Transformation:** Clothing is seen by others, and so is our behavior. When we put on compassion, humility, and love, others can see the transformation in our lives, reflecting Christ to the world.

By using the clothing metaphor, Paul emphasizes that our spiritual renewal should be as evident and intentional as changing what we wear.

If you feel like putting off the old you and stepping into the new feels too hard, you're not alone. The truth is, this isn't something we can accomplish in our own strength, and we don't have to. When we surrender to God and rely on His power, He gives us everything we need to walk in the new life He has for us.

Romans 6:3–4 (NIV) *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

Romans 6:6 (NASB95) *knowing this, that our old self was crucified with [Him,] in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;*

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.*

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV) *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

2 Peter 1:3 (NIV) *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, our old self was put to death, and now we get to live as a new creation in Him. He promises to continue His work in us, shaping us to reflect His divine nature and giving us all we need to grow in Him.



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Process

As we step into this next quarter, let's make a continued commitment to applying God's Word in practical ways. None of us perfectly walks in all the virtues we'll be studying, and that's okay. As we journey together, let's extend patience and grace to one another, knowing that we are all in process.

The more we intentionally "put on" these virtues, the more natural they will become. What may feel like hard work at first will, over time, begin to flow from a heart transformed by Christ. This is how discipleship transitions from theory to daily life, through practicing, persevering, and allowing the Holy Spirit to shape us step by step.

Discussion Questions: *Have you ever thought about character traits as clothing that you can take off and put on? How does this metaphor affect the way you view the process of growth and change?*

Wrap-Up / Challenge

Walking as a disciple means choosing to put off the old self and put on the new each day. This is a process we cannot do in our own strength, but God has given us all we need to overcome.

Spend time in prayer this week, thanking God for how He has already transformed your life. There may be much to learn and grow in, but we must be thankful for what He has already done to give us hope for the rest.

