

April 18, 2021

## 7. Becoming a New Person— Ephesians 4:21-32

This week I had a few days off, and along with taking some time to relax with my family I decided to overhaul my closet. In the past few years, I have gone from being a stay-at-home mom and student to working in a church. Problem is, my wardrobe reflected my former reality a little more than I have liked. I had the pleasure of going to one of my favorite secondhand stores and giving my wardrobe a much-needed refresh. Along with getting some new clothes that feel good and fit my lifestyle, I also was intentional about getting rid of what wasn't working for me anymore. I pulled *everything* out of my closet and tried it all on. If it didn't fit or make me feel comfortable or confident, I put it in a donation box. Since then, getting dressed in the morning, which had become a daily source of exasperation, has instead become something I enjoy.

My process this week mirrors the language Paul uses in Ephesians 4. I love how he uses metaphors that connect with our daily experiences! Just as I changed my wardrobe by putting away clothing that no longer fits in favor of pieces that work with my body and lifestyle, Paul presents a similar process of purging and refreshing of our behavior and ways of being—particularly in how we relate to one another. Paul invites the Ephesians (and us!) to “change the former way of life that was part of the person you once were, corrupted by deceitful desires. Instead, renew the thinking in your mind by the Spirit and clothe yourself with the new person created according to God’s image in justice and true holiness” (4:22-24 CEB).

Those who are in Christ, who have received his Spirit, are to be renewed beings. This means leaving behind lying, sinning in anger, stealing, foul words, bitterness, rage, slander, and malice. Those old ways of doing life simply don't fit anymore! Instead, we are to put on new behaviors, according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. This looks like speaking truth, being angry without sinning, working honestly, using our words to build up, and being kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving.

It seems that reminders such as these are never out of season. On the day I'm writing this, my social media feeds are exploding with arguments between Christians over a particular sentence addressing racism in a prayer written by Dr. Chanequa Walker-Barnes (you can find the details in the April 8, 2021, post titled “Prayer of a Weary Black Women,” <https://www.drchanequa.com/blog>). I was utterly dismayed as I read comment threads filled with foul words, bitterness, rage, slander, and malice—all said by Christ followers to Christ followers. While disagreement and conflict are unavoidable realities, this way of engaging with it is utterly unbecoming. It is not fit for Christ's people.

It's time for a change of clothes.

—Rachel Wallace  
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*Looking for participant guide page numbers in the leader guide? The page numbers in the leader guide work for both guides.*

## Resources for this session

- **Kevin Ressler** is the presenter for unit 2, New Creation. These teaching videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each weekly session.  
*The videos are free and available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#).*
- A **Salt & Light Reproducible** is available for use with this session, found at [www.MennoMedia.org/SL](http://www.MennoMedia.org/SL).