

Preface

Isn't it enough to put on Christ in baptism and live a good moral life?

Are professional psychologists and psychiatrists best suited to help me change?

This course of study focuses upon the Biblical concept of *putting off and putting on*. Putting off and putting on occupies a prominent place in the teaching of the apostle Paul and is worthy of our time and effort to understand what the Lord revealed to him of the process. Since, in my lifetime in Jesus Christ, I have heard little about the practical application of this concept, I have to wonder if we have given it proper attention in our time. Still, putting away, or off, and putting on must be as important to the salvation of a soul as initial conversion.

Notes used in developing this study guide were the result, first, of four decades of study and thought in this area. Further, during the last thirty plus years, pieces and parts of this material have been the content of several seminars and workshops in congregations of churches of Christ as well as public lectures in the United States and Europe. The usual theme was *Biblical Relationships* or *Marriage and Family*. Also, these principles have been used with success in a number of counseling sessions of individuals and families dealing with mental and behavioral problems stemming from drug abuse, marital breakdown, homosexuality, dishonesty, depression, financial mismanagement, faulty communications, and discipline of children.

A word about the credentials of the author is certainly in order, particularly for a study of this type. I am neither a board certified psychologist or psychiatrist. I have no formal education in these scientific fields. I have, however, been a student of the Bible for many years, and have informally studied various fields of psychology to supplement my understanding of the Bible's view of human psychology and to test the thinking of men in the crucible of God's truth.

While serving as an elder as well as evangelist of the Lord's church, I have been called upon over the years to counsel with individual Christians in their battle to overcome habitual sins and improve the quality of close relationships. To assist in this work, I studied therapeutic counseling at the Atlanta Biblical Institute of Counseling under the guidance

of Dr. Howard Eyrich who taught me much about the techniques of effective counseling and the practical application of what he called the ethical passages of the Bible. His training proved to be invaluable, and I continue to be grateful.

I have tried in this material to let the Scriptures speak for themselves. I believe that, for the most part, the correct interpretation of the passages used is self-evident, at least to one who is honest with the text. Your comments and questions in that regard are welcome. As to the application of the principles and techniques presented in this course for changing behavior, experience has taught they really work when diligently and prayerfully applied.

You may find that there is too much material in this study guide to cover thoroughly in one calendar quarter of typical Sunday and Wednesday class periods conducted by the church. Consequently, some lessons may need to be left for individual study. The following chart may help the teacher choose how to allocate available time:

Lesson#	Title	Comments
1	Introduction	Important for foundation.
2	Psychology and the Bible	Important overview. If allowed, class discussion could become involved and lengthy, but major points can be summarized.
3-4	Human Nature in the Bible & An Absolute, Inerrant Standard	Review of God's nature, His creation in man, and the revelation of His will.
5-6	Jesus Christ, the Perfect Model & Jesus Christ, a Character Study	The nature and example of Jesus Christ our perfect model and the importance of modeling behavior in the human family.
7-10	Source of Behavior, Building a Value System, Changing Behavior, & Guilt: Source and Solution	These are the core lessons of the course – what putting off and putting on means and practical steps in how to apply its principles. Also, the importance of guilt in the process.
11-14	Depression, Habitual Anger, Mastering Addictions, & Anxiety and Its Antithesis	Descriptions of and keys for putting away misbehaviors, i.e., habits that are common among humans, even Christians.
15	Self-Esteem	Explanation of how low self-esteem contributes to ungodly behavior and what to do about it.
16	Promoting Mental Health	Important for everyone – how to promote mental health and well-being.

Lesson#	Title	Comments
17	Love and Other Motivations	An important lesson in what motivates us to do what we do.
18	Patient Hope	Vital to a Christian's physical and spiritual health.

Also, it should be noted here that the author is available to teach the essence of this material to congregations in a week long series of sermons or a weekend seminar series of five or six lessons. Presentations can be followed by a period for questions and answers, if desired.

Much of the material of several lessons in this study guide are presented in outline form. There is a practical reason for this. In most classes I have taught, there have been some who wanted to dig more deeply into the subject, and others who did not have the time or interest to do so. That may be especially true in a study of this kind. The presentation of thoughts in the logical arrangement of an outline allows each student the freedom to be cursory or dig deeply. In fact, it may be advantageous to determine how deeply you will go based upon your familiarity with the lesson at hand. You choose, and may the Lord richly bless your study.

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