**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 47**

**Ephesians 4:20-24**

That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. What is the way of life of a Christian? What have I learned?
2. Why should I put off my old self? How do I put off my old self?
3. What are the things in my former way of life do I need to put off? What seems to keep coming back from my old life?
4. How do I put on a new self? What tempts me to go back to my former self?
5. How different am I now as a Christian compared to how I was before? In what ways do I think and live differently? What changes am I most thankful for?

***Insight:***

To become a Christian is to have a new way of life. Biblical truths should find their way into how we live our lives each day. Becoming a Christian is not about changing your religion, it’s about changing your life.

To be a Christian is to put off our old selves. To no longer be our old selves is a choice we need to make every day. It doesn’t happen automatically as our old self is our default mode. We must reject our old self daily. That is why we need to be constantly be reminded of who we are now. This is yet another reason why we ought to read our Bibles and pray every day. If we don’t have our time with God today, we might forget to put on our new self.

We should not be our old self because that version of us was being corrupted by evil desires. When something is corrupted, it is not useful anymore. Imagine a device which has been corrupted. It is defective and it might even be dangerous to use. Why use something defective when you can use something better?

A person cannot be a Christian and yet continue to live his former way of life. That old self is corrupted by deceitful desires. Our desires were deceitful because they promised us happiness we would never receive. Instead of bringing us joy, our desires brought us pain. Do you remember what your desires did to you?

Our desires were self-centered. Now we should be Christ-centered. Our life used to revolve around us, now Christ is our life. Everything we did was to please ourselves, now we focus on pleasing God. So, becoming a Christian is a radical change in us. How different are we now from who we were before?

We must also remember that we can only be one self at a time. Before we can put on a new self, we need to put off our old self first. To enjoy our new life in Christ we need to let go of the old way of life.

Putting on a new self is not about physical appearance (except to the extent our former appearance reflected our old selves). The change is a new mind. To apply a computer analogy, the hardware (our body) is the same but the software or operating system (our mind) has been upgraded. Our old software was corrupted, it had too many viruses and malware. So, we were never at our best. We could not function the way we should. Now we have better software which is constantly being updated by God. Therefore, to be a Christian is to think differently. We look at the world, our lives and who we are in a new way. Our problems may be the same but we have a new approach or a new way of looking at them. Because we have repented, our minds have changed.

Our new self is created to be like God. We should be thinking like God. We should be looking at the world as God does. This paradigm shift should be seen in every aspect of our lives. We live, speak and act differently. Even our online behavior must be godly. We should only post, share, and comment the way God would. Would God approve of the things we do online? Can you imagine Jesus doing the things you do online?

We need to see people as God sees them. We no longer categorize people based on our prejudices or preferences. We don’t idolize the rich, the celebrity or the politician because we see their moral attributes more than their popularity, wealth or power. Neither do we look down on the poor and weak because we know God cares for them. We don’t avoid Christians who seem different from us because we see Christ in them. Thus, we no longer consider anyone from a worldly point of view (2 Co 5:16). This includes our view of ourselves.

Our new self was created to display true righteousness and holiness. Sometimes righteousness or holiness can be fake. Consider the “righteousness” and “holiness” of the Pharisees and religious leaders during the time of Jesus. They preached righteousness but “they [did] not practice what they preach” (Mt. 23:3). Their holiness is only for display because “[e]verything they do is done for people to see” (Mt 23:5). They kept themselves clean on the outside “but inside they [were] full of greed and self-indulgence” (Mt. 23:25). May this not describe who we are.

Let us put off our old self and put on a new self every day of this lockdown.