

WAKE UP!

When you're out of town, staying in a hotel, do you notify the switchboard that you'd like a call at a certain time in the morning so you can get up on time? The operator will usually cheerfully agree to give you a wake-up call at the appointed time.

Sometimes a life event is so startling that it causes us to make significant changes in how we live and that is often referred to as a "wake-up call." Well, today we're going to learn about the most important wake-up call for a Christian. Let's turn in our Bibles to Romans 13:11-14:

11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

We see in the first half of verse 14 what a Christian is supposed to be. One who is clothed with the character, the disposition, the attitude, the habits, and the virtues of Jesus Christ. When unbelievers were looking for a title by which to identify this group of believers, they adopted the term, *Christian*, which meant, "Little Christ." Christ's followers attempted to live just as Jesus had lived, they attempted to be just like the One they worshipped. The heart of what Paul is saying in these verses is right here in verse 14. In fact I think this verse is the heart of the message from chapter 12 to chapter 16. I mean how much more can you say to believers than, "Be like Jesus Christ?" That is simply the bottom line to being a Christian. If you do that, you've really made it.

Just as Jesus taught in parables, so the Apostles also used analogy and images to enhance their teaching. One of Paul's favorite illustrations had to do with clothing. When you've finished doing some grubby work and may be wearing torn jeans and a stained sweatshirt, then take them off to put on a new outfit of sharp-looking clothes, how do you feel? Most of us feel like a new person when we're wearing new finery. Maybe that's why Paul so frequently compares the old life and the Christian life to putting off old tattered clothes and putting on the robe of righteousness that Christ provides. In fact, one of the most continuous images used in New Testament teaching was the idea of putting on a garment, being clothed with something, the idea of taking something off and putting something else on. Just as a person would put on a coat, they are to put on Jesus Christ.

We see this in Romans 13, and we also see it in Colossians 3, where Paul has been telling the Colossians that they have to **put off** a number of things. Let's note particularly what he says in verse 10 of the passage we are about to read, Colossians 3:5,8-10,12-15 (ESV):

*5 **Put to death** therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

*8 Now you must **put them all away**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.*

*9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have **put off the old self with its practices***

***10 and have put on the new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

*12 **Put on then**, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,*

*13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also **must** forgive.*

*14 And above all these **put on** love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

*15 **And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts**, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.*

We see here that there comes a time when a believer **puts off** or takes off the old person and puts on the new person. That is a reference to salvation. Salvation is seen by Paul as throwing off an old cloak and **putting on** a brand new one so that you are clothed in an entirely new way from head to foot. Now let's turn to Ephesians 4:17-19, 22-25 (ESV):

*17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you **must NO LONGER** walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.*

18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

*22 **Put off your old self**, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,*

23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,

*24 and to **put on the new self**, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

*25 Therefore, having **put away** falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*

This is yet another reference to this same image of **putting on** Christ when we're saved.

These passages refer to the **putting on** of righteousness, the **putting on** of Christ's likeness, the **putting on** of a new creation created onto holiness, which occurs at salvation. When you become a Christian, we refer to that as justification. God sees you just as if you've never sinned. You are now saved. At salvation we **put on** the Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of **taking on** His righteousness and holiness. What does Romans 3:20-

25 tell us?

20 FOR NO ONE CAN EVER BE MADE RIGHT IN GOD'S SIGHT BY DOING WHAT HIS LAW COMMANDS. *For the more we know God's law, the clearer it becomes that we aren't obeying it.*

21 But now God has shown us a different way of being right in his sight—not by obeying the law but by the way promised in the Scriptures long ago.

22 We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done.

23 For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.

*24 Yet now **God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty.** He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins.*

25 For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God's anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed his blood, sacrificing his life for us.

In other words, when you believe, the righteousness of God, which is in Christ, is placed in you. Now Romans 4:5:

*5 But **people are declared righteous because of their faith**, not because of their work.*

Saving faith results in **putting on** a cloak of righteousness. Romans 4:17-20:

17 The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over us, but all who receive God's wonderful, gracious gift of righteousness will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

18 Yes, Adam's one sin brought condemnation upon everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness makes all people right in God's sight and gives them life.

19 Because one person disobeyed God, many people became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many people will be made right in God's sight.

20 GOD'S LAW WAS GIVEN SO THAT ALL PEOPLE COULD SEE HOW SINFUL THEY WERE. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful kindness became more abundant.

As we received the **cloak of sin** from Adam, we receive the **cloak of righteousness** from Christ.

The old self has died and there is now a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 21:

17 What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!

21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

So when you come to accept Christ as Lord and Savior, you are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In Matthew 22:11-14, we read:

11 But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn't wearing the proper clothes for a wedding.

12 'Friend,' he asked, 'how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?' And the man had no reply.

13 Then the king said to his aides, 'Bind him hand and foot and throw him out into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 For many are called, but few are chosen."

What is this saying? Well, it's saying that you can't crash the Kingdom of God without the proper clothes. You can't get in unless you have the right garment. What is that garment? It's righteousness as Isaiah tells us in Isaiah 61:10 ESV:

10 I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God! For He has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness.

So when you came to Christ, you put on Christ in the sense that you put on His righteousness, you put on His holiness, you put on His nature, and God sees you as righteous in Jesus Christ. It's just a marvelous concept.

This image of putting on a garment is representative of putting on the righteousness of Christ. If you are a believer, you did this before God and God sees you in Christ. 2 Peter 1:3,4 (NRSV) says:

3 God's divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.

4 Thus He has given us, through these things, His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature.

We've become partakers of the divine nature, so God sees us as righteous, and we have a new capacity to be righteous. Now this brings us to a second dimension of this command to "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." This also applies to people who are believers. Now

how can you tell someone who has already put on Christ to “*Put on Christ?*” What Paul means here is that this is something that one has committed to, now let it happen to you practically. You might liken it to an athlete who puts on the uniform of a great team. It’s one thing to wear the uniform and be on the team, it’s something else to play up to the reputation of that team. So when one becomes a Christian one should act like a Christian is supposed to act. It’s one thing to be a judge and another thing to act like a judge ought to act. It’s one thing to be a preacher, and it’s another thing to act like a preacher ought to act. It’s one thing to possess the personal righteousness of Jesus Christ. It’s quite something else to live up to that.

You know what the Christian life is all about? It’s all about becoming what you are. It’s becoming in practice what you already are in commitment. That takes us to the place where, although we have taken off the old person and put on a new person, we have to keep on doing that. So this picture of taking off and putting on something else is applicable to the believer as well. Sometimes we find that living the Christian life, living as a follower of Christ ought to live, is a major challenge. That’s when I really love the promise here in 2 Peter 1:3, “*God’s divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness.*” He doesn’t give just a little, or a few of the tools, He gives us everything we need to live as He wants us to live. In this next passage we find something else to put on, something that will enable us to deal with the battles in the Christian life. Ephesians 6:10-17:

10 A final word: Be strong with the Lord’s mighty power.

*11 **Put on** all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil.*

12 For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.

13 Use every piece of God’s armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm.

*14 Stand your ground, **putting on** the sturdy belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness.*

*15 For shoes, **put on** the peace that comes from the Good News, so that you will be fully prepared.*

16 In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan.

*17 **Put on** salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

We need to **put on** this practical armor so that we can be what God wants us to be. We also read in 1 Thessalonians 5:8:

*8 But let us who live in the light think clearly, protected by the body armor of faith and love, and **wearing** as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.*

Going back to Romans 13:14, where Paul says “*To **put on the Lord Jesus Christ,***” he’s not calling for salvation, he’s calling for sanctification. He’s calling for the believer to be in practice what he is in commitment. Then in the last part of verse 14, Paul says: “*Don’t make provision to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.*” Now to begin with we should have an understanding of the word, “*provision.*” The word means, *forethought*, or *thought in advance*. It carries the idea of planning something, setting your plans for the purpose of fulfilling your desires. Paul is saying: “*Don’t plan to sin.*” And I would like to suggest to you that that is exactly what a sinful person does, they plan their sin. Before a person sins, they most often picture the sin, and the sin pictured in the mind attracts one’s lusts, and the sin originally thought of is played out in one’s actions. We might also say with some certainty that what we put in our minds is what we will become. If we pour filth into our mind in one form or another via television, movies, music, internet, and friends, filth will spew out of us into all our relationships and lifestyle. David knew this a thousand years before Paul wrote these verses in Romans. Listen to what David wrote in Psalm 36:1-4:

Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts. They have no fear of God to restrain them.
2 In their blind conceit, they cannot see how wicked they really are.
3 Everything they say is crooked and deceitful. They refuse to act wisely or do what is good.
4 They lie awake at night, hatching sinful plots. Their course of action is never good. They make no attempt to turn from evil.

Such a person lies awake at night planning their sin, and then pursues that sin as they’ve planned it in their own mind. There are times when we trip and stumble into sin. Such things are going to happen. But we are not to plan for such things if we’ve **put on** Jesus Christ. David writes again in Psalm 52:1-3:

You call yourself a hero, do you? Why boast about this crime of yours, you who have disgraced God’s people?
2 All day long you plot destruction. Your tongue cuts like a sharp razor; you’re an expert at telling lies.
3 You love evil more than good and lies more than truth.

Paul is saying in Romans 13:14, that there is to be **no place** in our lives for planning such things if we have **put on** Jesus Christ. “*Flesh,*” of course, in verse 14 refers to our humanness, which has a desire to do evil. It refers to your thinking, your mind, and your emotions. It’s true that since you received Christ as Lord and Savior, you have in you a new creation, a new nature, and a new person, but that new person is still encased in your humanness, your human body. So you have to be prepared to deal with the thoughts that start to develop from your humanness. So it is also important that we make no plans to submit to our humanness and do what we know we shouldn’t do.

You might be wondering how you deal with the desires of your flesh. Paul addresses that

problem in I Corinthians 9:24-27:

24 Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win.

25 All athletes practice strict self-control. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.

26 So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. I am not like a boxer who misses his punches.

27 I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

It isn't easy but it's not impossible. We have to stay on top of these things and exercise self-control, or the flesh will run away with us. Now let me suggest to you that to feel lust or to feel the desire to sin is evidence of the presence of sin in us. To fulfill that desire is to make clear how much power sin has over us. As long as we're in these mortal bodies we will feel the presence of sin in us. But at no time do we need to yield to the power of sin over us, because of the provision of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit of God. SO PUTTING ON JESUS CHRIST IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING. Listen to what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:30,31:

*30 God alone made it possible for you to be in Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made Christ to be wisdom itself. He is the one who made us acceptable to God. **He made us pure and holy,** and he gave himself to purchase our freedom.*

31 As the Scriptures say, "The person who wishes to boast should boast only of what the Lord has done."

Christ gives us the wisdom that leads to redemption and someday we will put on Christ in our new and glorified body when we reach Heaven, and then we will be like Him. **Put on** the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll never be sorry because you'll become increasingly like Him in this life, and then in the next you'll be just like Him, both physically and spiritually. Now we need to take a look at another key verse, and this one is 2 Corinthians 3:18:

18 And all of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord.

And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us,

we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.

This is referring to the fact that in the Old Testament Moses had to put a veil over his face because, after being with God for 40 days on Mt. Sinai, the glory of God shone on his face so brightly that people couldn't bear to look at him. But in the New Testament the veil has been taken off so that we can reflect the glory of the Lord, now that we know the saving power of Jesus Christ. We are to "brightly reflect" His glory to the world

around us. We look upon the glory of Christ and are changed into the same image of glory from one level to the next by the Holy Spirit of God. And just how is that accomplished? It is accomplished by gazing on Christ's glory. As you lose yourself in His glory by spending time with Him studying the Word and communicating with Him through prayer, you find that the Spirit of God is moving you from one level of glory to the next, closer and closer to the very image of Jesus Christ. Then the glory of Jesus just shines out through you. Moses wasn't aware of how the glory of God was radiating from him until people couldn't bear to look at him, and we also may not always be aware of how Christ radiates out from us, but if you spend time with Him, put on His righteousness, you can be sure His glory will rub off on you and other people will see it.

THE TRUE CHILD OF GOD WILL LEARN HOW TO LEAN ON THE POWER OF THE WORD. The true child of God will learn to lean on the Holy Spirit. Thus leaning on the Word and the Spirit, as the glory of the Lord is revealed before them, their deepest heart longing for holiness will be fulfilled. Another way to put this is found in Galatians 5:16:

16 So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

Or you can look to James 1:21:

21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the message God has planted in your hearts, for it is strong enough to save your souls.

As we submit ourselves in obedience to the Word of God, we find that the lust of the flesh is flushed out and we don't make plans to satisfy its desires. And we then become more and more like Christ, displaying His righteousness. Jesus was totally dedicated to God, absolutely holy, and not conformed to the world. He used all His God-given gifts to the maximum for the benefit of humankind. He treated every man and woman as they ought to be treated. He treated His enemies with love and forgiveness. He paid His taxes, and He was love. And if you'd like to be like that, **put on** Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. Jesus is perfect righteousness and perfect love.

Paul gives us three commands in Romans 13:11-14, for how we might **put on** Jesus Christ. Here they are: "Wake up"; "Cast off"; and "Put On." "Wake up," illustrates urgency. "Cast off," illustrates purity. "Put on," illustrates integrity. Let's look at Romans 13:11,12 NRSV:

*11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.
12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.*

We have to move fast; time is short. This is not time for complacency. There is no time for sleeping. **Wake up!** It's almost daylight. What are you doing sleeping? These words

go right to our hearts because we are so often complacent, thinking we have plenty of time left. I hear people say things like: “*I know I should go to church, but I don’t like all the hypocrites there. Maybe I’ll check out another one when things slow down at work.*” Or, “*Sunday morning is the only day I can sleep in.*” Or, “*there’s plenty of time left to do that later.*” Paul is saying at the beginning of verse 11 that we should add these things to those he’s already mentioned. “**Wake up!**” and pay your debt of love. “**Wake up!**” and behave or walk properly (verse 13). Paul has just given us all these things to do in chapters 12 and 13, and he’s told us how to do them, by putting on Christ. Now he’s telling us when we should do them. **Now!**

It’s **now time** to be a living sacrifice and not be conformed to the world. **Now is the time** to be dedicated to God. **Now** is the time to use your spiritual gifts. **Now** is the time to be related properly to believers and nonbelievers. **Now** is the time to submit to the government. **Now** is the time to pay your taxes. **Now** is the time to start loving the way God would have you love. **Do it now, there’s no time to waste.** The Greek word used here for time means, “*a season, era, or age.*” The word is used often in Scripture to mean significant periods in redemptive history (Matthew 26:18; Mark 1:15; Romans 3:26; Revelation 1:3). Paul is telling believers that they better realize we’re living in a vital season of redemptive history. This is the season immediately preceding the return of Jesus Christ. That’s a very important season in which to be alive. Are you aware of that? In Matthew 16:1-4, Jesus spoke to the Jewish leaders:

- 1 One day the Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Jesus’ claims by asking Him to show them a miraculous sign from heaven.*
- 2 He replied, “You know the saying, ‘Red sky at night means fair weather tomorrow,*
- 3 red sky in the morning means foul weather all day.’ You are good at reading the weather signs in the sky, but you can’t read the obvious signs of the times!*
- 4 Only an evil, faithless generation would ask for a miraculous sign.*

Jesus tells them they’re good at predicting the weather but they don’t have a clue about their spiritual clock. “*You’er terrific at telling us when it’s going to rain, but you have no idea what God is doing in the world.*” Christians don’t want to be like that, do they? Do you know what time it is? Many of us live as if we didn’t. We live as if Christ would never come. Many of us live as if we could sleep in until the dawn comes and Christ returns, and not give a thought to those who are not yet saved .

Jesus may not come in the next twenty-four hours. But on the Messianic calendar it’s the next event. And you and I are two thousand years closer to it happening than these people were. There’s a lot more sand in the bottom of the hour glass now than when Paul wrote these words. And you know what? Jesus’ coming could be very soon. So, since you know what time it is, **Wake** from your sleep! It’s time to be in spiritual readiness. And this isn’t the first time Paul told people to **wake up**. Look at 1 Corinthians 15:34 NKJV:

- 34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the*

knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Paul, in effect, is saying: “Are you aware that this age where people can be saved will soon be over and there are a whole lot of people that don’t have the knowledge of God. What are you doing sleeping? You have no awareness of the priorities of life!” Then in Ephesians 5:14 NKJV, Paul says:

14 Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.”

We better wake up because there are still a lot of people that haven’t accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. There’s still a lot of work to do. The Holy Spirit is calling dedicated Christians to get their heads off their pillows. There are far too many Christians who are spiritual Rip Van Winkles. They’ll probably sleep right into the arrival of the Kingdom and someone will have to wake them up to give them their crown.

What’s all the hurry about here? It’s almost dawn. What happens at dawn? Romans 13:11 tells us:

The coming of our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

This verse doesn’t mean we’re in the process of becoming Christians and we’re not there yet. Paul couldn’t possibly be talking to unbelievers because he’s referring to the moment when they believed, and he includes himself by using “we.” Paul is referring here to the future aspect of salvation. There are three aspects to our salvation: past, present, and future. And we’ll close with this.

Past salvation occurred when a person came to believe in Christ as Lord and Savior. That is their soul’s redemption from sin’s penalty. Present salvation is where the soul is given freedom from the power of sin through the presence of the Holy Spirit who now dwells within them. Future salvation will be Heaven where we will be free from the presence of sin and be in the presence of God and Christ. We will also have new and perfect bodies that will last forever. This is what Paul is talking about here and he’s making his appeal based on the second coming of Christ. Morning represents the coming of Jesus Christ, so we need to get up and get at it because it won’t be long before the morning comes. Christians are called to holy living based on the coming of Jesus Christ. In Philippians 4:5,6, Paul writes:

5 Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

6 Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

Hebrews 10:24,25:

24 Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good

deeds.

25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.

Get your act together, patiently wait for the Lord, and get sin out of your life. He'll be here soon. The Lord is coming. Wake up! We'll conclude chapter 13 next week.