

Colossians 3:9-11 Putting on the New Man

1

Introduction

You can tell a lot about people in our society by the way they dress. From baseball players to bus drivers, from postal carriers to policemen, people wear the uniform of their profession. That is precisely Paul's point in 3:9–17. Christians must dress themselves spiritually in accordance with their new identity. They have died with Christ and risen to new life. Salvation produces a two-sided obligation for believers. Negatively, they must throw off the garment of the old, sinful lifestyle, as Paul pointed out in 3:5–9a. Positively, they must put on the lifestyle of the new man. To do that, they must understand the position, progress, partnership, performance, perfection, and priorities of the new man.

2

Colossians 3:9-11

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

3

The Position of the New Man

Colossians 3:9b-10a

Since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new *man*. This section links 3:5–9a, which tells believers what to put off, and 3:12–17, which tells them what to put on. It bridges the chasm between the old self and the new self—a chasm that believers could never have crossed unless Jesus had made them new creatures. **Since** indicates that transition to be an accomplished fact. The old self with its evil practices has already been laid aside.

4

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The relation of the **old man** and the **new man** has been disputed. Many hold that at salvation believers receive a new man but also keep the old man. Salvation thus becomes addition, not transformation. They argue that the struggle in the Christian life comes from the battle between the two.

This view, though popular, is not consistent with biblical teaching. At salvation the old self was done away with. Paul told the Corinthians, “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17). To the Romans he wrote, “our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” (Rom. 6:6). Salvation is transformation not addition.

5

The Position of the New Man

Colossians 3:9b-10a

Since you have put off the old man with his deeds,¹⁰ and have put on the new *man*.

What is the **old man**? It is the unregenerate self, the former manner of existence in Adam. The old, wretched, depraved, sinful self is “being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit” (Eph. 4:22). It is that which was replaced by the regenerate self.

The **new man**, in contrast, is the regenerate self. It is what believers are in Christ. The new self is the new creature Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 5:17. It walks differently from the world (Eph. 4:17), in divine love (Eph. 5:1), in the light of God’s truth (Eph. 5:8), and in wisdom (Eph. 5:15), loving God’s law and God’s Son, hating sin and pursuing righteousness.

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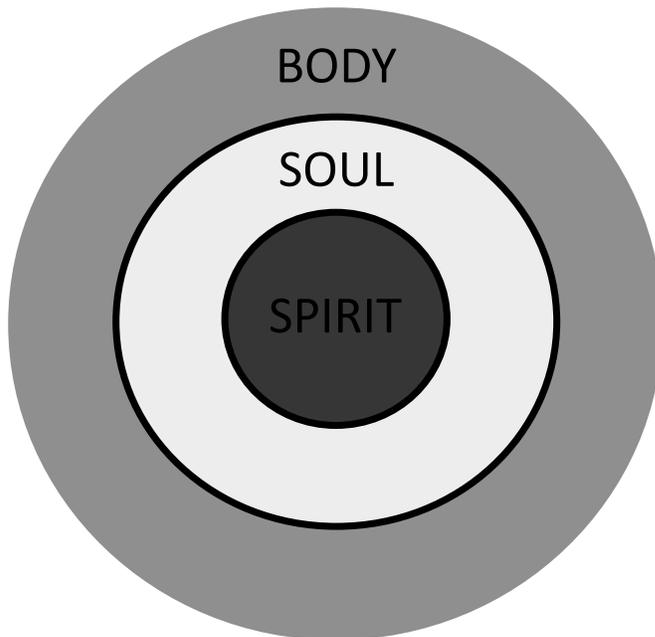
The Position of the New Man

Colossians 3:9b-10a

Since you have put off the old man with his deeds,¹⁰ and have put on the new *man*.

The question then arises as to why believers sin if the old self is gone. They do so because the new self lives in the old body and must contend with the flesh. Paul shows this in the conflict described in Romans 7:14–25. He makes it clear there that sin is not in the inner man, the “I” that loves what is holy, but is in the flesh. The flesh includes all the sinful desires, drives, and passions associated with our humanness. The presence of the unredeemed flesh causes us to “groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23).

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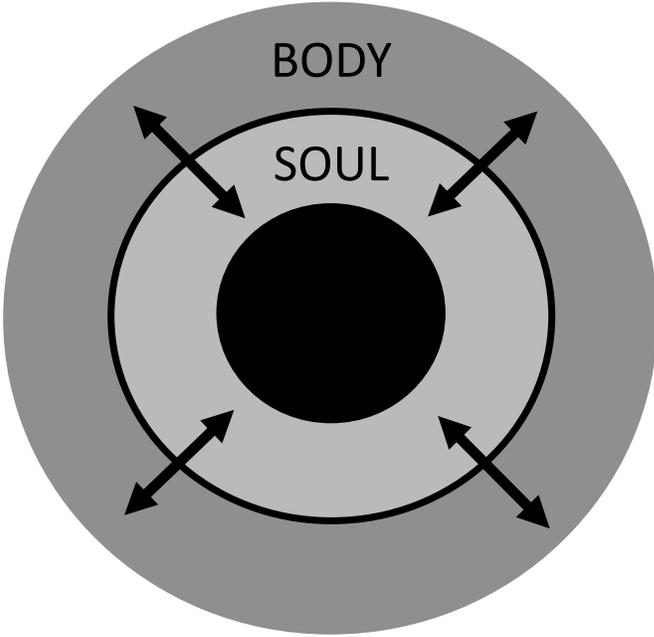


The SOUL is the real you!
It is the part of you that is
eternal.

The BODY is the vehicle
the soul uses to interact
with the physical world.

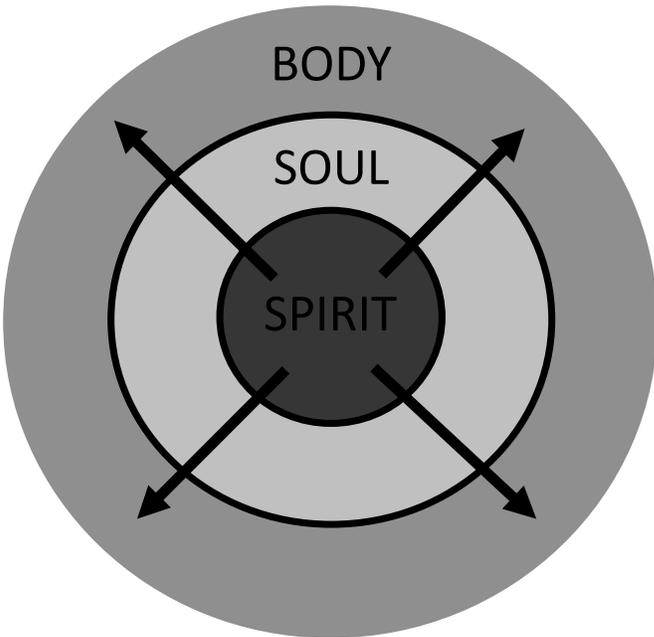
The SPIRIT is the part of
man that interacts with
the Spiritual world.

8



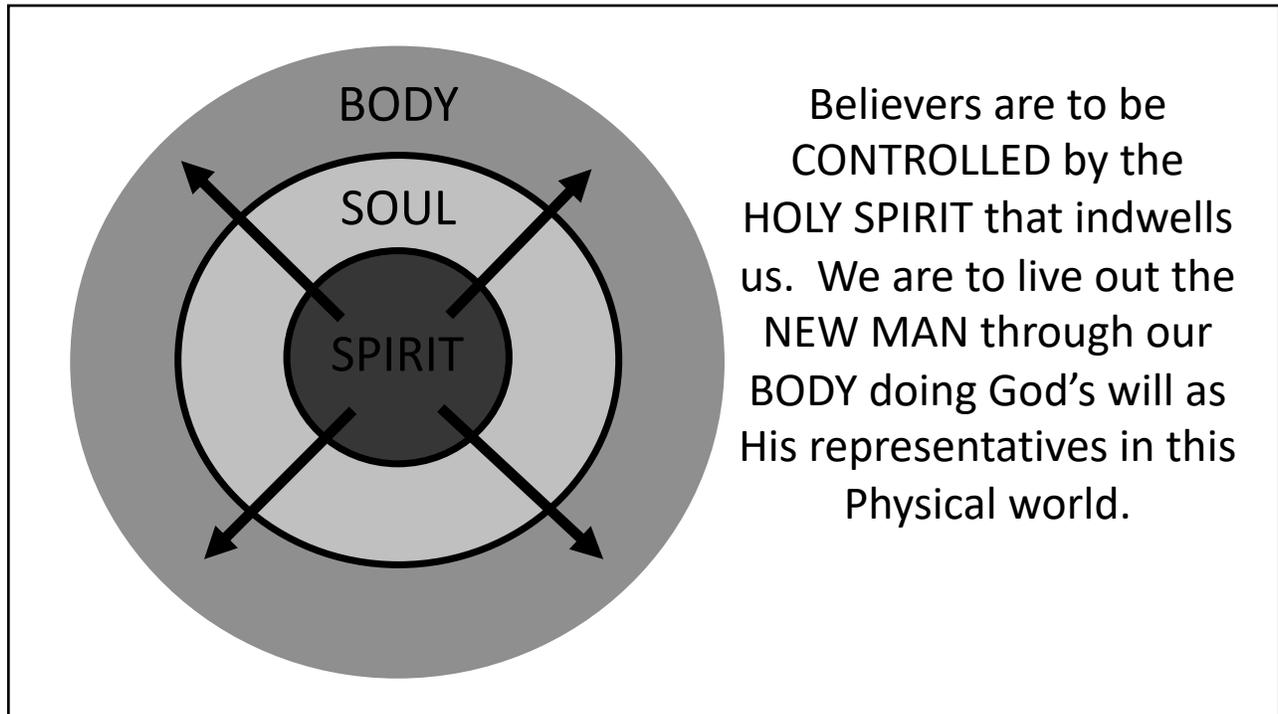
Before Salvation, our SPIRIT was cut off from God. This is our OLD MAN, dead and in bondage to sin! Our SOUL unable to connect with God came to rely on the BODY which is fallen. We were controlled by our sinful flesh!

9



At Salvation, our OLD SELF experienced a radical transformation. Jesus placed His SPIRIT in us and restored our relationship with Himself. Our SOUL was redeemed and is being transformed into the IMAGE OF CHRIST!

10



11

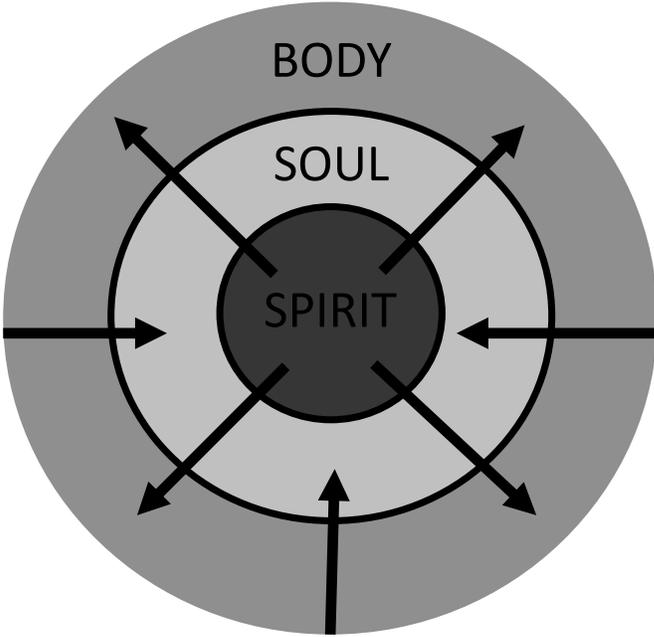
The Progress of the New Man

Colossians 3:10b

who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.

Possession of the new man does bring the believer instant spiritual maturity. The flesh will continually dangle the garments of the old self in front of the new man and urge him to put them on. The battle against the flesh will go on throughout this life. The new man is complete, yet has the capacity for growth, just as a baby is born complete and has the ability to grow. Paul wrote that "our inner man is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16), so that it can cope with the decaying outer man.

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The BODY is fallen and one day will be put off and we will receive a NEW BODY that will be free from all sin.

Until then our BODY, the WORLD and CULTURE exert pressure on the SOUL with its passions and desires (rebellion). We must make a choice if we will yield to the SPIRIT or the FLESH!

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The Progress of the New Man

Colossians 3:10b

who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.

The new man **is renewed in knowledge**. Being **renewed** refers to being new in quality and has the sense of contrast to what was already there. This is a new quality of life that did not exist before. Unlike the decaying depraved nature of the flesh, the new man is continually being **renewed by God**. **Knowledge** refers to a deep, thorough knowledge of God's nature, purpose, and will. It is to see the world and ourselves from His perspective. The process of renewal brings increased knowledge. There is no growth in the Christian life apart from knowledge: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

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The Progress of the New Man

Colossians 3:10b

who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.

The source of **knowledge** is the **Bible**. Paul wrote to Timothy, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Peter exhorts believers, “Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2). The Word of God is the food that fuels the growth of the **new man**. How fast believers grow depends on how much knowledge they put into practice in their lives.

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The Progress of the New Man

Colossians 3:10b

who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.

The goal of knowledge is to conform the new man into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ who created him. First Corinthians 15:49 tells us, “Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” It is God’s plan to make believers like Jesus Christ. “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be conformed to the image of His Son*” (Rom. 8:29). The new man will continue to progress toward Christlikeness until the Lord returns or the believer dies. The apostle John wrote, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

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The Partnership of the New Man

Colossians 3:11

where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

The risen life also has implications for the church. Just as individual believers put off the habits of the old self, so also the church puts off the old barriers that separated people. There is no place for racial or cultural barriers. God has united all believers in Christ Jesus (cf. Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:15). This was a startling the first-century world. The racial, religious, cultural, and social barriers separating people were as deep-seated as any in our day.

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The **Greek and Jew**, one **circumcised** and the other **uncircumcised**, were separated by seemingly insurmountable **racial and religious barriers**. They had nothing to do with each other. Jewish people refused to enter a Gentile house. They would not eat a meal cooked by Gentiles, nor buy meat prepared by Gentile butchers. When they returned to Israel, they showed their disdain for Gentiles by shaking off the Gentile dust from their clothes and sandals. Even the apostles were reluctant to accept Gentiles as equal partners in the church (cf. Acts 10–11). Needless to say, the Gentiles returned those sentiments.

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where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

The gospel broke down those barriers, and Jew and Gentile became one in Christ.

Ephesians 2:13–16

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

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Strong cultural barriers also pervaded the ancient world. The cultured, educated Greek or Jew looked with contempt on the **barbarian** or **Scythian**. Barbarian was a word used to describe people who spoke an inarticulate and stammering speech. The Greeks intended it as a term of derision on those who were not among the elite (i.e., themselves). The Scythians, were a nomadic, warlike people who were known for their savagery. A fellowship including Greeks, Jews, and Scythians was unthinkable in the ancient world. Yet that is precisely what happened in the church. Christ demolished the cultural barriers separating men.

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A social barrier existed between the slave and the freeman. The slave was viewed as “a living tool.” However, both slaves and freemen were saved and became brothers in Christ because they “were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free” (1 Cor. 12:13). Paul reminded the Galatians that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). He told Philemon to view Onesimus, his runaway slave, “no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother” (Philem. 16).

21

So What ...

Colossians 3:11

where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

We are new creatures in Christ. We still live within these sinful bodies and our minds are contaminated with the philosophies and values of this fallen world. We must make a conscious effort to take off the Old Man which is death. In return, we must put on the New Man which is Christ.

As redeemed people (New Men) we make up the church. There is no place for man-made barriers in the church since **Christ is all, and in all**. Because Christ indwells all believers, **all are equal**. He breaks down all racial, religious, cultural, and social barriers, and makes believers into one new man (Eph. 2:15).

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