

**THE ALL-INCLUSIVE, EXTENSIVE CHRIST
REPLACING CULTURE FOR THE ONE NEW MAN, Week 4**

KEY STATEMENTS

The Christ who replaces our culture with Himself for the one new man is the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, the preeminent One, the centrality and universality of God's economy.

When we have the vision of the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, experience Him as our life and the constituent of our entire being, and live Him instead of our culture, the one new man will appear among us in a practical way, and we will realize the life of the new man.

We need to be renewed day by day with the fresh supply of the resurrection life to replace our culture and to become the one new man in reality by becoming as new as the New Jerusalem.

We need to live the life of the one new man instead of our culture by learning Christ as the reality is in Jesus;
the way the Lord Jesus lived on earth
is the way the one new man should live today.

**Being Renewed Day by Day
with the Fresh Supply of the Resurrection Life
to Replace Our Culture and to Become the One New Man in Reality by Becoming as New as the New Jerusalem**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 2:15; 4:22-24; Col. 3:10-11

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

Ephesians 2:15 **Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances**, that He might create the two in Himself into **one new man**, so making peace,

Ephesians 4:22 That you **put off**, as regards your **former manner of life**, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,

Ephesians 4:23 And that you be **renewed in the spirit of your mind**

Ephesians 4:24 And **put on the new man**, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

Colossians 3:10 And have **put on the new man**, which is being **renewed unto full knowledge** according to the image of Him who created him,

Colossians 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but **Christ is all and in all**.

PUTTING OFF THE OLD MAN

We have considered two negative things that damage the church life: ordinances and doctrine. Now we come to a third negative thing—the **old man**. Some Christians interpret the old man in 4:22 as the old nature. It is true that the old man includes the old nature, but it also includes a great deal more. Ephesians 4:22 indicates that the old man is all-inclusive: "That you have put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit." Here Paul speaks of putting off, as regards our **former manner of life**, the old man. The former manner of life includes **everything related to us**: what we are, what we have, our family life, and our social life. Paul's meaning here is that we must put off whatever we are, whatever we do, and whatever we have. We are to put off our very way of living.

The old man with all it includes is a **damage** to the church life. Wherever the old man is, there can be no church. This means that what we are, what we have, and what we do make the church life an impossibility.

Ordinances, doctrine, and the **old man** are the three main negative things that damage the church life. If we have ordinances, the church life is gone. If we are occupied with doctrine, it will not be possible to have the proper church life. In addition, if we continue to live according to the old man, the church life will be seriously damaged, even terminated. However, if we have no ordinances or doctrines and if we put off the old man with his former manner of life, we shall have a marvelous church life, a church life that will be a **miniature of the New Jerusalem** in the new heaven and new earth. In such a church life it is impossible to have division. (*Life-Study of Ephesians, chapter 71*)

Day 1

I. Ephesians 4:22 says, “Put off, as regards your **former manner of life**, the old man”:

- A. The old man refers to our **natural life in our soul**; the old man is our very being, which was created by God but became fallen through sin—Rom. 6:6:
 1. The old man with all that it includes is a **damage to the church life**; wherever the old man is, there can be no church; this means that what we are, what we have, and what we do make the church life an impossibility.
 2. If we continue to live according to the old man, the church life will be seriously damaged, even **terminated**; if we **put off the old man** with its former manner of life, we will have a **marvelous church life**, a church life that will be a **miniature of the New Jerusalem**; in such a church life it is **impossible to have division**.
- B. The words **manner of life** imply a great deal; in every country of the world and among every people there is a characteristic manner of life:
 1. The former manner of life includes everything related to us; we must put off whatever we are, whatever we do, and whatever we have; we are to **put off** our very way of living and our culture; the stronger our culture is, the more critical we will be of others—cf. Eph. 4:31-32; Col. 3:12-14.

Day 2

2. If we truly desire to be **renewed**, we need to **put off the former manner of life**, which involves our way of living and our culture; in the new man there is no possibility for Greek and Jew, barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man to exist, because the former manner of life found among these peoples has been put away.
3. Whenever we return to the old manner of life, we will spontaneously sense that we are **darkened within** and **estranged from God’s life**—Eph. 4:17-19.
4. In order to have the church life, people from different cultures and countries have to put off the old man embodied in their former manner of life; **in the church life there is room only for Christ**—Col. 3:10-11.
5. How deplorable it is to see so-called churches formed according to nationality; instead of treasuring our heritage, we should disown it; we automatically prefer our old community life, but **our way of life must become absolutely new in nature, manner, and practice**.

To put off the old man is not merely to put off the old nature; it is to **put off the old way of life**, the **former way of living**. Our old way of living was not entirely an individualistic way of life, for it involved our social life, our community life. No human being can be altogether individualistic. Human nature is inherently social. To be a human being is to live in society and to have some kind of community life.

In the church we have the **best community life**. If there were no church meetings, we would feel aimless, and our existence would be meaningless. **We enjoy coming together in the meetings**. The fact that the saints often linger after the meetings are dismissed indicates that in the church we have a genuine community life. If we would be the one new man, we must **put off** the community life of the old man and **put on** the community life of the new man. (*Life-Study of Ephesians, chapter 93*)

Day 3

II. Since the new man in Ephesians 2:15-16 is a **corporate man**, the new man in 4:24 must also be corporate; according to Ephesians 4:24, we need to **put on the very new man that has already been created in Christ**:

- A. In baptism we **put off the old man**, which was crucified with Christ and buried; it was also in baptism that we **put on the new man**—vv. 22-24; Rom. 6:6, 4.
- B. The putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new man are **accomplished facts**; now we must experience and realize these facts by being **renewed in the spirit of our mind**—Eph. 4:23:
 1. To **put off** the old man is to **deny** and **renounce** our old self by applying the cross to the self—v. 22; Matt. 16:24.
 2. To **put on** the new man is to **live** and **magnify** Christ through the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19-21a); this is to apply what Christ has accomplished in creating the new man (Eph. 2:15; 4:24).

- C. **Our spirit mingled with the Spirit of God** must become the spirit of our mind (v. 23); then all our living will be by the spirit, and whatever we do will be according to the spirit; as we are renewed by this spirit, we put on the new man.
- D. We need to walk according to the mingled spirit that is **spreading into our mind and filling it**; in this way the daily walk of the new man will be in the spirit of the mind; this is the secret of the church life—v. 23.
- E. The new man is **in our spirit**; the way to put on the new man is for our spirit (which is mingled with the Spirit), in which are found God, God's dwelling place, and the new man, to **become the spirit of our mind**—2:22; 4:23:
1. For the spirit to become the spirit of our mind means that the spirit **directs, controls, dominates, overrules, and possesses** our mind (cf. 1 Cor. 2:15-16; 2 Cor. 2:13; 10:4-5); when the spirit directs our mind, our whole being is under the control of our spirit.
 2. How much we put on the new man depends on **how much our spirit directs our being** (1 Cor. 2:15); when our spirit dominates and directs us, there is no ground for culture, for opinions, or for ordinances; there is no room for our way because our whole being is dominated, controlled, governed, and directed by our spirit.
 3. The more the mingled spirit penetrates, saturates, and possesses our mind, the more we let Christ's mind become our mind—Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16; Rom. 12:2.
- F. When we believed in the Lord Jesus, the life-giving Spirit came into our spirit, bringing with Him the new man as a finished product; now the new man must **saturate and spread into every part of our being**; this spreading is both the **putting on** of the new man and the **renewing**.
- G. We should not live according to the vanity of the mind but according to the **spirit of the mind**; this is the key to the daily living of the corporate one new man, the secret to having a church life filled with the character of God, the aroma of Christ, and the oneness of the Spirit—Eph. 4:3-4, 17-18, 23-24.
- H. By our **loving the Lord** and by the **exercise of our spirit in prayer** and in **reading the Word** day by day, our mind is filled with the mingled spirit; this changes and renews our mind; for us to be renewed in our mind is to get rid of all the old concepts concerning the things of the human life and be made new again by the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the enlightening of the Holy Spirit—Psa. 119:105, 130; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Deut. 17:18-20.
- I. The only possibility of God's purpose being fulfilled in this age, to have the one new man in reality, is if we would all be **willing** to be renewed in the spirit of our mind.

LIVING BY THE MINGLED SPIRIT

It is crucial for us to see that God wants nothing but Christ. If we see this vision, we shall set aside our standard and aspire to be **one with the Lord in our spirit moment by moment**. The **all-inclusive Christ is now in our spirit**. First Corinthians 6:17 tells us that he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. In 2 Timothy 4:22 Paul says, "The Lord be with thy spirit". Our standard should not be the culture we have inherited or the culture we ourselves have made. **Our standard should be the oneness with the Lord in our spirit**. Do not try to be a good wife or husband. Instead, simply be one spirit with the Lord. Then you will live Christ because Christ will actually be living in you.

God has placed us into Christ. If we see that our culture frustrates us from experiencing the indwelling Christ, we shall realize that as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, the Lord indwells our spirit and that we are one spirit with Him. **We need to live by this mingled spirit as the standard**. If we **allow** Christ to live in us day by day, we shall spontaneously live by Him. In this way, Christ will replace our culture. (*Life-Study of Colossians, chapter 39*)

Day 4

III. The central point of Paul's word to the Colossians concerns **the renewing of the mind unto the full knowledge of Christ, who is the image of God; the new man was created in our spirit and is being renewed in our mind unto full knowledge according to the image of Christ**—Eph. 2:15; Col. 3:10-11:

- A. Because the new man was created with us who belong to the old creation, he needs to be **renewed**; this renewing takes place mainly in our mind, as indicated by the phrase unto full knowledge—v. 10.
- B. The creation of the new man according to God has already been completed, but in our experience the new man is being renewed unto full knowledge little by little; the more we put on the new man, the **more we are renewed according to what God is**, and the more we bear His image, the expression of what He is—v. 10.
- C. To be renewed is to have **God's element added into our being** to replace and discharge our old element—Rev. 21:5a; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:16:

1. Our natural and national mentality was educated and built up according to our racial and cultural background; this is the **greatest hindrance** to the practical existence of the new man.
 2. In order for the one new man to come into full existence, we must experience a thorough **renewal of our mind**, which has been built up according to our nationality and culture.
- D. **Newness is God**; therefore, to become new is to become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead:
1. God is forever new, and He **infuses** His ever-new essence into our being to renew our entire being—Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:10.
 2. The Spirit of God renews us by **infusing our inward parts with God's attributes**, which are forever new, can never become old, and are everlasting and unchanging—Rev. 21:5a.
 3. The renewing Spirit **imparts the divine essence** of the new man into our being to make us a new creation, the new man—Titus 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.

RENEWED UNTO FULL KNOWLEDGE

According to 3:10, the new man is being renewed “unto full knowledge.” Some translations say “in full knowledge” instead of “unto full knowledge.” However, the Greek preposition should be rendered “unto.” This rendering indicates that **full knowledge is the issue of renewing**, its result, not the means of being renewed. For example, children grow unto knowledge, but they do not grow by means of knowledge. The more children grow, the more they know. However, it is not true to say that the more they know, the more they grow. If parents consider the growth and development of their children, they will see that they do not grow by means of knowledge. Rather, they grow unto knowledge, increasing in knowledge as they grow and develop.

This principle of growing unto knowledge applies to our **spiritual life**. If we **seek the things on earth** instead of the things above, we shall **not have the renewing of the new man**. This means that we shall not experience the growth of the new man. It is extremely difficult for the new man to grow as long as we seek earthly things. But when we **seek the things above**, the **new man grows within us**. The result of this growth is **full knowledge**. Therefore, the new man grows unto full knowledge. Years ago, the new man within you had not grown very much. This made it difficult for you to know spiritual things. But now that the new man has grown within you, it is much easier for you to understand spiritual things. This indicates that growth issues in knowledge. This is the reason Paul says that the new man is being renewed unto full knowledge. (*Life-Study of Colossians, chapter 62*)

Day 5

- IV. We need to be those who are being renewed day by day with the fresh supply of the resurrection life to replace our culture and to become the one new man in reality by becoming as new as the New Jerusalem—2 Cor. 4:16:**
- A. Putting on the new man does not take place once for all; on the contrary, it is a **lifelong** matter, a **gradual** process that goes on **throughout** our Christian life.
 - B. We, the regenerated believers, as parts of the new man, should **walk in the newness of the divine life in resurrection** and serve in newness of spirit—Rom. 6:4; 7:6.
 - C. The believers should be renewed to be as new as the New Jerusalem since they all are becoming the New Jerusalem by **walking in newness of life** (6:4) and building the New Jerusalem by **servicing in newness of spirit** (7:6).
 - D. Our being renewed in the spirit of our mind is for our **daily transformation** into the image of Christ through the consuming of our outer man by the suffering in our environment for the renewing of our inner man—2 Cor. 4:16:
 1. **While we are in the midst of suffering**, we need to receive the renewing; otherwise, the suffering we pass through means nothing to us; within us there is a refuge—our spirit—Psa. 91:1; 27:5; 31:20; Isa. 32:2; 2 Tim. 4:22; Gal. 6:17-18.
 2. God **arranges our environment** so that little by little and day by day our outer man will be consumed and our inner man will be renewed by the fresh supply of the pneumatic Christ as the resurrection life—2 Cor. 4:16.
 - E. In order to be renewed day by day, we need to be **revived every morning**—Matt. 13:43; Luke 1:78-79; Prov. 4:18; Judg. 5:31; 2 Cor. 4:16.
 - F. We are renewed day by day through four items: the **cross** (vv. 10-12, 16-18); the **Holy Spirit** by which we are reconditioned, remade, and remodeled with the divine life (Titus 3:5); our **mingled spirit** (Eph. 4:23); and the **holy word of God** (5:26).
 - G. We need to **come to the Lord's table in newness** (Matt. 26:29); the Lord never takes an old table; we need to be renewed by learning to say, “I'm sorry; forgive me.”

Such a Renewing of the Mind Issuing in the Transformation of the Believers in Their Spiritual Life

Such a renewing of the mind issues in the transformation of the believers in their spiritual life. Titus 3:5 refers to the **washing of regeneration** and the **renewing of the Holy Spirit**. The washing of regeneration *washes away our old life*; following this, the renewing of the Holy Spirit *changes our mind*. *When our mind is renewed, our whole being is transformed*. This is to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. The washing of regeneration purges away all the things in the old nature of our old man, whereas the renewing of the Holy Spirit dispenses the new things, the divine essence of the new man, into our being. Through this we turn from the old condition in which we were into a completely new condition, from the state of the old creation into the state of the new creation.

Today our problem is due mostly to our **mind**. Brother Nee said that some people are afraid of others stealing their wallet from their pocket, so they are always feeling in their pocket for their wallet; he said that this is an indication that they have mentally stolen from others. This is to have a disordered mind. Sometimes when someone has something wrong in his mind, he begins to have wild imaginations. A wife may begin to weep when she indulges in wild imaginations. All these matters are related to the mind. *God Himself has become our life, He is changing our disposition, and He is also renewing our mind*. Thus, we can have the proper concepts and can pursue Christ in a proper way. Often when some came to me to debate about some biblical questions, I said, "It is impossible for your kind of mind to understand the Bible, and I won't argue with you. Your mind is a mind that simply cannot understand the Bible." Our disposition needs to be sanctified so that we may partake of God's holy nature; our mind also needs to be renewed so that we may be transformed in our spiritual life. This is the saving that God renders to us in the organic aspect of His salvation. (*The Organic Aspect of God's Salvation, chapter 3*)

Day 6

V. The renewing of the new man depends on our **seeking the things which are above**— Col. 3:1-2; Eph. 2:5-6:

- A. To seek the things which are above is to **respond** to and **reflect** Christ's activities in His heavenly ministry—Heb. 2:17; 4:14; 7:26; 8:1-2; Rev. 5:6; Col. 3:1-2:
 1. There is a **transmission** taking place from Christ in heaven to us on earth by means of the **all-inclusive Spirit in our spirit**—Eph. 1:19, 22-23; 2:22:
 - a. **Our spirit** is the **receiving end** of the divine transmission, whereas the **throne of God** in heaven is the **transmitting end**—Rev. 5:6.
 - b. By **turning to our spirit**, we are lifted into heaven; because of the transmission from the throne of God in heaven into our spirit, when we experience and enjoy Christ here on earth, we are simultaneously in heaven—4:1-2.
 2. In His heavenly ministry Christ is shepherding people, and we need to **cooperate with Him** by shepherding people; if this fellowship is received by us, there will be a big revival on the earth to bring the Lord back—1 Pet. 5:1-4; cf. Matt. 9:36; 10:1-6; John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25; Heb. 13:20.
- B. If we turn to the heavenly Christ with all His activities and set our mind on these things, the **renewing of the new man will take place spontaneously**—8:1-2; 12:2; Col. 3:2.
- C. This consummates God's intention in making the believers the new man as the new creation to consummate in the New Jerusalem; the new man as the masterpiece of God's work is an absolutely new item in the universe, a new invention of God—vv. 10-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15-17; Eph. 2:10, 15.
- D. God's goal is to have the **one new man** that ultimately will **consummate in the New Jerusalem**, which will be the final consummation of the one new man.