

“Taking Off, Putting On”

Session 5: Ephesians 4:17–5:21

Movement: Grown

Theme: Transformation isn’t a feeling that comes over you. It’s a daily decision you make — one thing taken off, one thing put on, over and over again.



Check-In | *DO IT follow-up from Session 4* • ~3 minutes

1. Last week you chose a Do It option. Did anyone try theirs? What happened . . . or what got in the way?

OPEN IT | *Icebreaker* • ~5 minutes

2. Is there something you used to wear, say, or do regularly that you look back on now and think . . . what was I thinking? What changed?

READ IT | *Scripture* • ~4 minutes

Say it:

Paul is about to get specific. He’s going to name things that need to come off and things that need to go on — and he’s going to be blunt about it.

- Ephesians 4:17-32

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~10 minutes

★3. Verses 22-24 give us the core command: take off the old self, be made new in the attitude of your minds, put on the new self. Paul isn't describing a one-time event. He's describing a daily practice. What's the difference between transformation as something that happens to you and transformation as something you participate in every day?

★4. Verses 25-32 get very specific: lying, uncontrolled anger, stealing, unwholesome words, bitterness, rage, slander. Paul isn't writing to obviously wicked people. He's writing to church members. Which of these is the one your group . . . or if you're honest, you personally . . . would most benefit from taking more seriously?

5. Paul says "do not let the sun go down while you are still angry" (v.26). Most of us have let the sun go down . . . and then the next day . . . and then longer. Is there a relationship in your life right now where unresolved anger or bitterness has been sitting longer than it should? What's kept you from dealing with it?

READ IT | Scripture • ~4 minutes

Paul told us what to take off. Now he's going to tell us what to put on — and it's bigger than a list of behaviors.

- Ephesians 5:1-21

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~14 minutes

★6. Verse 1 says to "follow God's example . . . as dearly loved children." The word means to mimic or imitate. Children mimic their parents naturally — not out of obligation, but because of relationship. What does it look like in your actual daily life to mimic God? And is that mostly something you do consciously . . . or something that just happens as you spend time with him?

★7. Verse 29 says only say what is "helpful for building others up according to their needs." Think about the people closest to you — your family, your small group, your coworkers. Do they experience you as someone whose words build them up? What would they say if you asked them?

SAY IT | Leader Teaching • ~3 minutes

Here's what's easy to miss about this passage: Paul isn't describing a program for moral improvement. He's describing what it looks like when identity becomes behavior. You've been made new. The new self already exists. Taking off and putting on isn't how you get there — it's how you live from there.

And notice that every single thing Paul tells people to take off or put on has to do with other people. Stop lying — to each other. Resolve anger — before it damages the relationship. Build each other up with your words. Be kind and compassionate to one another. You can't practice any of this alone. Transformation in Ephesians is always communal.

So the question this session leaves us with is simple: What needs to come off . . . and what needs to go on? Not as a way to earn anything. Not as a performance for God or for this group. But as someone who has already been made new . . . and is choosing every day to live like it.

Do NOT skip this:

Leaders Note: Give your group members a copy of the "Mission Statement Framework" attached to the end of this document. (A digital copy is available on the small groups website and will also be emailed to you.) You will use this for sessions 5, 6 and 7. This is the first of two informal conversations that build toward the Session 7 mission statement finalization. Think of Sessions 5, 6, and 7 as a three-week arc toward something your group will own together. Allow 3-4 minutes of open conversation before moving to the Do It section. This is informal. You're not facilitating a structured exercise, just opening questions 1 & 2 and letting people respond naturally. Two or three responses are plenty. If the conversation goes longer and you need to trim time, shorten the Do It section ***DO NOT skip this.***

Say It: (read the following transition aloud.)

Before we move into our “Do It” choices tonight, we’re going to take 3-4 minutes on something we’ll be building toward across the next few weeks. We’ve been talking all quarter about what it looks like to be grounded and sent. Starting tonight, I want us to begin thinking together about what that looks like specifically for this group. The first two questions can be found on your handout.

1. Who are we?
2. What has God been doing this quarter?

Don’t try to answer it fully right now. Just give a few answers out loud. We’ll come back to this in Session 6 and land on something together in Session 7.

DO IT | Application • ~6 minutes

Say it:

Verse 15 says "Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity." Choose one of the following or create your own “Do it” plan for this week and share it with the group.

Choose one of the following this week:

- **Name Your One Thing.** From the list in 4:25-32, identify the one behavior that most needs to come off in your life right now. Write it down. Then write down what you’re going to put on in its place — Paul always pairs them. Tell one person in your group what you chose. Ask them to check in with you next week.
- **The Mimic Practice.** Each morning this week, before you engage with anyone, ask one question: “How would someone who is dearly loved by God treat the people I’m about to encounter today?” Then try to live the answer. At the end of each day, notice where you did and where you didn’t.
- **Words That Build.** Verse 29 says let nothing unwholesome come out of your mouth — only what is helpful for building others up. For one day this week, pay attention to every word that comes out of your mouth. At the end of the day, ask: Did my words build anyone up today? Who . . . and how?
- **Deal With It Before the Sun Goes Down.** Consider the relationship where unresolved anger or bitterness has been sitting longer than it should (question 5). This week, do one thing to address it. Not necessarily a full conversation. Not a resolution of everything. Just one move: a text that opens a door, a phone call you've been putting off, or an honest prayer asking God to prepare you to deal with it. Name what you're going to do before you leave tonight.

- **Reflect On It.** Write two headings on a page: “Taking Off” and “Putting On.” Under each one, write honestly about what that looks like in your life right now. Bring what you find to God as a prayer.

PRAY IT | *Closing Prayer* • ~3 minutes

Father, you’ve already made us new. The old self has been crucified and we are empowered by Your Holy Spirit. Forgive us for the days we live in our old ways — reaching back for what we’ve already been freed from, holding onto patterns that belong to a version of ourselves you’ve already buried. Tonight we heard your invitation: take it off, put it on. Not to earn anything. Not to impress anyone. But because we are your dearly loved children . . . and we want to look like our Father. This week, give us the awareness to notice what needs to come off, and the courage to actually take it off. And may what we put on in its place be something that builds the people around us up rather than tearing them down. In Jesus’ name, Amen.