

1 Let us put on our "Christian Big Boy" Pants

2 Scripture

- Therefore, as God's chosen people,
 - holy and dearly loved,
 - clothe yourselves with
 - compassion,
 - kindness,
 - humility,
 - gentleness, and
 - patience. (Colossians 3:12)
- Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. (Colossians 3:13a)
- Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13b)
- And over all these virtues
 - put on love,
 - which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:14)

3 Scripture

- Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts since,
 - as members of one body, you were called to peace.
 - And be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)
- Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly

- as you teach and admonish (warn or reprimand) one another with all wisdom and
- as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)
- And whatever you do, whether in word or deed,
 - do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
 - giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

4 Introduction

- A little over a year ago, a Reddit user posted this:
 - "Adults of Reddit, what should every teenager know about 'the real world'?"
- Here is a sampling of the responses:
 - \$1,000 is a lot to owe — but not a lot to have.
 - When we're younger, ...
 - [w]e think we have all the time in the world.
 - Our life is often filled with, "I'll get to that later" or "I have plenty of time."
 - Let me tell you, we don't have nearly as much as we think. Time slides by ridiculously fast as you age.
 - Everything is expensive when you move out [from your parents' home].

5 Introduction

- More responses:
 - Learn how to manage money. ...
 - Remember that there is an order of where your money goes:

- Rent and bills must come first and foremost before anything else.
- Don't worry about not having the respect of people you don't respect.
- You are the main character in your story — but you are not even an afterthought to eight billion people.
- You'll have to work to have a good life and be tired like you never have been before.

6 Introduction

- More responses:
 - "It is possible to commit no mistakes and still lose. That is not a weakness. That is life."
 - Comparison is the thief of joy.
 - During high school, learning how to learn is more important than anything you're actually learning.
 - Life is extremely unfair.
 - And there is no reason for that. People who expect things to be fair in the real world are always sorely disappointed.
 - Everything is temporary.

7 Introduction

- It's highly probable that most of us who have gained some life experience can readily comprehend the logic and wisdom behind most, if not all, of these nuggets of advice.
- But how would you feel if one of those nuggets was something like,
 - "fake it until you make it"?
- If the advice was meant to help us develop better character traits,
 - we might be receptive to understanding the contributor's perspective.

- But suppose I told you that the contributor in this case was the Apostle Paul.
- Would you be surprised?

8 Paul's Advice to Us

- In essence, "Fake it until you make it" is a valid shorthand summary of Paul's message to the Colossian Christians in our text for tonight.
- When he wrote the letter we call Colossians,
 - Paul was in prison because of his preaching activity, and
 - couldn't talk to the saints personally.
- Nevertheless, he had a very pastoral interest in them and wanted them to understand the essence of growing in Christ.

9 Paul's Advice to Us

- In the earlier chapters of this letter, Paul dealt with some doctrinal controversies affecting the Colossian church.
- But here in Chapter 3, he gives direct advice about how Christians should relate to one another and the world around them—using the metaphor of "taking off & putting on" certain clothes.
- He tells them to ...
 - Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self. (Colossians 3:9-10).
- I'm going to refer this concept of "taking off" and "putting on" as Replacement Discipleship, which is not a little truth in the New Testament but a huge emphasis made by the Holy Spirit and God's Holy Apostles.

10 Paul's Advice to Us

- This metaphor also is remarkable because it implies that if compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and love don't feel natural to us, we can develop them just as we put on fresh clothing.
- While love should be sincere, we might have to fake it until the magic takes place in our hearts and minds.
- What Paul was really saying was not so much "fake it until you make it," but "fake it until you become it."
- In other words,
 - when we through faith put on our "big boy" pants and practice virtue instead of vice,
 - the Holy Spirit does a work of grace in us, allowing us to grow in character and maturity in Christ.

11 Today's Culture

- Sometimes, when a man is whining to a friend about a matter he's unhappy about, the friend will say,
 - "Come on, Fred, put on your big-boy pants and deal with it."
- Either way,
 - it's the kind of slang that friends can use with each other to communicate that the complaining person should quit acting like a spoiled child and
 - instead, address the problem as a mature adult.
- The idea of putting on that identity (of a mature adult) is an acknowledgment that even grown-ups don't continuously operate at that level but should.

12 Replacement Discipleship in Colossians

- The verses in Colossians right before our Scripture reading tonight were about "removing certain things" first before we can "put on virtue."
- According to the Apostle Paul,

- Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)
- Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. (Colossians 3:6)
- Then Paul gives more specifics,
 - But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. (Colossians 3:8)

13 Replacement Discipleship in Romans

- In the same way, count yourselves “dead to sin” but “alive to God” in Christ Jesus.
- Therefore,
 - Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.
 - Do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness,
 - Rather,
 - offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and
 - offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. (Romans 6:11-13)

14 Replacement Discipleship in Romans

- I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves.
 - Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and ever-increasing wickedness,
 - so now offer them in slavery to righteousness, leading to holiness (sanctification). (Romans 6:19)
- For ...
 - if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die;

- but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, (Romans 8:13)

15 Replacement Discipleship in Ephesians

- So I tell you this and insist on it in the Lord, that you must
 - no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. (Ephesians 4:17)
- They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God
 - because of their ignorance in, them
 - due to the hardening of their hearts. (Ephesians 4:18)
- Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to
 - sensuality to indulge in "every kind" of impurity,
 - with a continual lust for more. (Ephesians 4:19)

16 Replacement Discipleship in Ephesians

- Surely, you heard of him 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. (Ephesians 4:21-24)

17 Replacement Discipleship in Ephesians

- And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,
 - with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- “Get rid” of all ...
 - bitterness, rage and anger,
 - brawling and slander,
 - along with every form of malice (malicious spitefulness).
- Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:30-32)

18 Replacement Discipleship in Ephesians

- Be imitators of God,
 - therefore, as dearly loved children (Ephesians 5:1) and
 - live a life of love (self-sacrificing love for the good of others),
 - just as Christ loved us and
 - gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and
 - sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:2)

19 Summary

- The Weight of Scripture in the New Testament supports the following;
 - To grow in Christ
 - We must “take off” the attitudes and actions characterized by

- Sexual immorality
- Lust and Greed, and
- those emotional reactions we have when we don't get our way, such as
 - anger, rage, malice,
 - slander, and filthy language.

20 Summary

- Instead, we must become imitators of God and put on all virtues, which include
 - compassion,
 - kindness,
 - humility,
 - gentleness,
 - patience,
 - longsuffering,
 - forgiveness, and self-sacrificing love.
- Again, the point is abundantly clear and is supported by the Weight of Scripture.

21 Summary

- All virtue and beauty we esteem and acknowledge are found in God, and
 - when we take the initiative and live out those virtues,
 - we allow God to live through and in us where we are changed and transformed by God's Holy Spirit.

- As the Apostle John says,
 - God is love. Whoever lives in love “lives in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:16)
 - In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world, we are like him. (1 John 4:17)

22 Summary

- The point of this sermon tonight is simple:
 - let us “put on” our Christian “Big Boy or Girl” pants and
 - live a life of virtuous behavior consistent with God’s nature.
- If we do,
 - we will grow in our relationship with God and become mature and produce good fruit,
 - which will also significantly affect our effectiveness in faith, ministry and confidence in prayer that is real and not fake.

23 Summary

- Since this concept of spiritual growth and maturity is supported by the “weight of scripture,” any church, ministry or minister who doesn’t support this view should be ignored.
- Again,
 - if anyone tries to get you to chase after signs, wonders, and miracles and doesn’t exhort you toward “love and good deeds,” they are a false teacher, even if they call themselves an Apostle.
- Likewise,
 - anyone who redefines “Christian agape love” as tolerance for what the Bible condemns should also be ignored as they, too, are false teachers of the Word of God.

24 Final Word

- In the next few days, we will be celebrating the birth of a savior, Jesus Christ.
- According to his own words, Jesus said,
 - “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)
- On the night before he gave his life as a ransom for many, he said, sweating profusely,
 - “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” (Luke 22:42)

25 Final Word

- Having satisfied the demands of justice on the cross, where we now have the freedom to worship God with a clean conscience,
 - let us use that freedom to offer up our bodies as a living sacrifice,
 - putting off the “old self” and putting on the “new man” created to be like God.
- If we do,
 - we will become imitators of God,
 - where the Holy Spirit lives richly in us, and
 - we produce much fruit to the glory of God. AMEN!