

A New Direction

Pastor Russ Chambers | September 20, 2026

Main Scripture: Ephesians 4:17-32

Connect

ICEBREAKER

Think of a habit you eventually broke, good or bad, that took real effort to change. What finally made the new way stick?

Message Snapshot

BIG IDEA

The gospel does not simply give us a new destination, it gives us a new direction, and that new direction shows up as we put off the old self, are renewed in the Spirit, and put on the new self Christ is forming in us.

STICKY BOTTOM LINE

The gospel does not merely tell us what to stop. It teaches us what to replace it with.

REMEMBER THIS

What are you still wearing that belongs to the person you used to be?

KEY TRUTHS FROM SUNDAY

- Paul says we can no longer walk the way we used to walk. Walk describes a settled direction and daily pattern of living, not a single stumble, and being in Christ has to change that direction.
- The old pattern starts small and grows: what captures the mind eventually shapes the heart, and what shapes the heart eventually shows up in our actions.
- Christianity is not a set of new rules to learn, it is a Person to know. Knowing what we ought and ought not do does not give us the power to do it. Knowing Christ does.
- The pattern for change is three steps: put off the old self, be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.
- Paul pairs every put off with a put on: falsehood with truth, destructive anger with timely reconciliation, stealing with honest work and generosity, corrupting talk with words that build up, bitterness and malice with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. He gives each pair a reason: we are members of one another.

Scripture

Read together: Ephesians 4:17-32

As you read, notice the contrast between the old self and the new self in verses 22-24, then look closely at verses 25-32 and notice how Paul never just says stop, he always names what to do instead.

Discuss

OBSERVE

- 1 In verses 17-19, how does Paul describe the way people walk apart from Christ? What words does he use for their thinking, their understanding, and their hearts?

- 2 In verses 22-24, what three things does Paul say to do with the old self and the new self? What is the new self created after?
- 3 Read verses 25-32 and list the pairs. For each thing Paul says to put off, what does he say to put on in its place?

UNDERSTAND

- 4 Pastor Russ said the gospel does not simply give us a new destination, it gives us a new direction. What is the difference between those two ways of thinking about being saved?
- 5 Pastor Russ said what captures the mind eventually shapes the heart and then shows up in our actions. Where have you seen that progression play out, in your own life or in someone else's?
- 6 Paul gives a reason for almost every put off and put on: we are members of one another. Why do you think God ties our private habits, like anger or honesty, to the health of the whole group rather than treating them as personal business?

APPLY

- 7 Pastor Russ asked, what are you still wearing that belongs to the person you used to be? Name one specific old response, habit, or way of coping God is inviting you to put off this week, and what you sense He is asking you to put on in its place.
- 8 Pastor Russ talked about how dangerous isolation is for him personally, and how he had to leave the house on a Friday rather than stay alone with temptation. Where does isolation tend to be risky for you, and what is one practical way you could stay connected to people this week instead of retreating alone?

Live It Out

Pick one put off and put on pair from Ephesians 4:25-32 that is actually true of your life right now, whether that is anger and reconciliation, bitterness and kindness, corrupting talk and words that build up, or something else. Name it out loud to God, and take one concrete step this week, a phone call, an honest conversation, an act of generosity, that puts on the new way in place of the old.

Prayer

- Thank God that He has not just given us a new destination but a new direction, and that His Spirit is at work renewing us.
- Confess the specific old habit or response each person is still wearing, and ask the Spirit for power to put it off.
- Ask God for urgency and courage to seek reconciliation quickly, rather than letting anger or bitterness take root.
- Pray for anyone in the group who tends toward isolation, that they would reach out to others rather than pull away this week.

Father, thank You that You did not just relocate us, You are redirecting us. Forgive us for the old habits we have kept wearing long after You called us new. Renew us in the spirit of our minds, and give us the courage to put off what belongs to who we used to be and put on what belongs to who we are in Christ. Remind us we are members of one another, so what we carry never stays private. In Jesus' name, amen.

HOST TIP The first Apply question asks people to name a specific old habit out loud, which is harder than it sounds. Go first with something honest and small yourself before you open it up, and let a real pause sit there rather than filling the silence. People need a moment to decide to be honest.