

Kingdom Perspectives – Part 3

Welcome to Kingdom Perspectives, part 3, September 24, 2008. In the series on Kingdom Perspectives, I envision it will be given in nine parts. Today is part 3, Kingdom Attire. We began with Kingdom Roots where we looked at how every single thought that you have is functioning in one kingdom or the other because there are only two kingdoms: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan; the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. There is no neutral ground in regard to these two kingdoms. With that we looked at kingdom content because it's a concept people hesitate to articulate because it sounds so intolerant. But the fact is the kingdom of God's content is everything which is all summed up in Jesus. And if it is not all summed up in Jesus, then it is anti-Christ and it is functioning in the kingdom of darkness. So every single aspect of our lives is functioning in the content of one kingdom or the other. I reminded us in that session that we are in a battle. The battle is between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. There is no neutral ground in that battle. For us the battle is fought in our minds. The battle is fought with each skirmish over your next thought. And the battle is fought over your next thought over the simple question of what is truth?

Then we looked at kingdom views and explored the various wrong views that Christians have beginning with the unsaved condition and then going into the saved condition about these various kingdoms. Christians are notorious, as we reviewed in that session, for thinking that there's a vast neutral ground between these two kingdoms. And even once saved, Christians are notorious for thinking that they have a kingdom within God's kingdom where they get to set the parameters of time, place, extent of energy consumption, extent of giving possessions and so on. And other than that, Christians still think that there's a vast neutral ground where they have the kingdom that is totally their own, functioning outside the kingdom of God and outside the kingdom of Satan.

The Word of God also tells us the things to put on and things to take off. These are always uttered as commands. When we're given a command in Scripture, a choice is involved. We either obey or disobey. We are to be functioning in the kingdom of God as Christians, post salvation. We're told what to wear in the kingdom; thus, this session is called Kingdom Attire.

First poster. The thing that we most commonly put on is self. This refers to the flesh with self on the throne. Recall that self on the throne functioning in self determination is our default position through decades of habit and the drive of the unhindered sin nature. This is what we put on if we're ignorant that there's another choice to put on or ignorant that we are functioning with self on the throne. It's also what we put on if we simply don't pay attention to exercise the drive to make a choice. We can put this on as an act of rebellion. Overt disobedience, we can call it. We can actively choose to put on self or we can choose it by not choosing. And we don't choose because of either ignorance or apathy.

The next option about what to put on is we can put on the spirit. This is alluded to in various ways in Scripture. The Scripture that tells us to put on the armor of God is in Ephesians, chapter six. We are told there that the battle is against spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places meaning the spirit realm. We're told that the true battle is not against physical beings. Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that the physical world in which we dwell is an expression of

the spiritual reality and the spiritual reality behind the physical is the reality which imparts all meaning to the physical. All of the weapons that we're told to put on when we put on the armor of God are in the spirit realm—that is to say in the non-material or immaterial realm. If we put on self on the throne, then we will assess everything through our cocoon of carnality meaning the various frames of reference of cost, comfort, convenience, and control relying on the natural realm to make those decisions. If we put on self we will rely on our own knowledge, our own senses, our own schemes, our own analysis, and our own willpower to accomplish goals. Ephesians 4:22 tells us to lay aside the old self. In other words, to take it off. We're not told to do that just to cause us pain. We're told to do that because self reliance can never accomplish the purposes of God. Self reliance cannot defeat the forces of wickedness in heavenly places against which we are pitted. In fact, self on the throne is the root of all sin and self on the throne is the root of functioning in the system of this world in the kingdom of darkness. Satan's main ploy is to have human beings believe the deception that we can do this thing. We can do this thing. The unsaved man thinks he can do this thing. Adam thought he could do this thing. He could look at all the variables and opinions and discern based on how he views reality what will lead to his best outcome. That summary phrase of we can do this thing is something that we have to combat even as Christians. But God does not leave us to function in a vacuum. He not only tells us what to take off, He then tells us what to put on. We put on the armor of God.

The next thing that He tells us to put on is the new creation. This is our spirit; this is our born again spirit. This is the spirit that is born of the spirit of God. This spirit is our new true self and this spirit is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. Ephesians 4:24 – And put on the new self which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. We have trouble believing that. But that's what the verse tells us. And that verse also allows us to understand other verses that relate to our new creation spirit—that is our true identity as Christians. I John 4:17 – As He is (speaking of Jesus) so also are we in this world. Weigh that verse. Can you just believe that the Word of God says that? It says that as Jesus is, so are we, and that does not await some future time. It pertains to our status now. As He is, so are we in this world. I Corinthians 6:17 – But the one who joins himself to the Lord (speaking of Jesus) is one spirit with Him. My new creation, blood-bought spirit is holy and righteous made in the image of God. It is as Jesus is right now in this world and it is one spirit with Him and it is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. That is the new creation self that we are to put on. We'll either put on the new creation self or we will put on the old self which has caused so much grief to myself, grief to the world, and grief to God Himself.

Then we're told to put on one more thing. Romans 13:14 – Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We are given commands to put on certain things. And we're given commands to put off certain things. These things are like oil and water. They do not mix. You will, with every moment of your life, be wearing one set or the other. You will put off one set; or you will put off the other set. You cannot put on both simultaneously because they don't mix. And you cannot put off both simultaneously. If you refuse to pay attention, refuse to set the mind, and refuse to get dressed, then you will wear the old attire of the old man of self on the throne, functioning in self determination.

There's a third option which is not really a different option; but I'll say it for amplification. This is when a Christian puts on, meaning that he fakes it. This is to put on number one (meaning

self) while pretending to put on number two (meaning the spirit). That charade has several areas of subterfuge. One area is to try to fake God out with the subterfuge; but that is hard to do with an omniscient Being Who knows the secrets of the heart. Another is to fake out certain Christians so that they regard you as doing well and cease harassing you with their Scriptures and platitudes because of what a good Christian you've become. The last is to fake yourself out. You do that by doing works in the kingdom, but producing dead works, dead testimony, death to the abundant life all the while worshipping self while giving yourself credit for worshipping God. This is akin to the people invited to the banquet who all had reasons not to come. That is to say they wanted credit for coming without coming. And this is what number three ends up being. A critical mass who put on number one while pretending to put on number two will produce deadness in any church.

So what does Scripture mean when it tells us to put something on? Well the concept is simple enough; but it has multiple aspects. It means to pay attention, to call to mind, to meditate on, to regard as truth, to live in the light of, to base your interpretations and analyses on, to base your choices on, and to base your life on. It also carries the opposite polarity. We looked at what it means to put something on; but in regard to that which is the opposite polarity—that which we are to take off—we are not to call to mind, not to pay attention to, not to meditate on, not to regard as truth, not to live in the light of, not to base interpretations on, not to base analyses on, not to base choices on, and not to base your life on. So that which we're told to put on is what it means to build your house on the rock. That which we're told to put off is building your house on sand, that which has no eternal value in the kingdom of God. The simplest explanation, if you had to give a simple one, is the following. Whatever you put on at any moment is whatever you are placing your faith in at that moment. To put on the Lord Jesus Christ is to place your faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified at that very moment in that present thought. It is to live and move and have your being in Who He is and what He is, and what He has done and what He is doing, and what He will do. To put on the armor of God is to put on all that God has provided for you in Jesus Christ. It is to walk by faith at that moment in His salvation given to you through grace, His righteousness, His truth, His gospel of peace, His Word, and His faith.

To put on the new creation is to walk by faith in who you are in Jesus Christ including specifically your new identity. You walk by faith that you simply are a new creation. You're not a poor sinner saved by grace. You are a new creation. You are a born again spirit born of the seed of God, born of the Word of God, born of the Spirit of God. You are an alive spirit to God. You are a spirit which has been created in righteousness and true holiness in the image of God. You are a spirit which is as Jesus is in this world right now. You are a spirit that is one spirit with Jesus Christ. And you are a spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. That is who you are. And that's what you are to put on, that is, function in the light of all those truths. To put these things on means to place your faith in them at that very moment. Simultaneously, of course, it means placing no faith in your old self which was on the throne, no faith in your own self determination of what truth is. You put no faith in your own intellect, your own sex appeal, your own speaking or teaching ability, your own health, your own wealth, your own theme, your own position, your own willpower, your own interpretation of natural events, and your own programs in the church. You cannot put faith in these things based on self because you are actively and aggressively putting all your faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, what you have in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and who you are in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When you

fully put on Jesus Christ and fully take off all that is anti-Christ including self on the throne, then you are abiding in Jesus Christ. Then you are summing up all things in Jesus Christ. Then you are glorifying Him to the maximum. You are worshipping Him. You are bearing maximal, valid testimony of Him to the world. That's our kingdom perspective on kingdom attire. It tells us what to take off and it tells us what to put on so as to be fully attired and properly attired in the kingdom of God.

But remember God doesn't change His methodology. He always gives us choice that it may be of love. He always gives us only two choices that we won't miss the right answer based on complexity. So we get to choose; but we never get to choose the choices, we never get to choose the consequences of the choices. We do not get to not choose and we never get to choose both. That's simple enough. It's the same related to our kingdom attire. That's why I call it choice clothing. The only question then is which one will we put on and which one will we put off? Paraphrased, will we as Christians walk moment by moment by faith in self or by faith in Jesus Christ in all of the dimensions that I articulated. So may it never be that we would ever put on self while pretending to put on Jesus Christ.

Next poster. This poster is used to clarify for us some points about how Scripture uses the word self. I do this because of the following Scriptures. Luke 9:23 (Jesus says) – If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. Matthew 19:19 (Jesus says) – You shall love your neighbor as yourself. So one of these verses both spoken by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, says deny yourself and the other says love yourself, and in fact, love your neighbor as you love yourself. So how can both be true? Well in my unsaved condition, I would have argued that point with Susan or any other Christian who testified to me about these contradictory verses. The answer, of course, is that Scripture uses the word self in multiple ways with multiple meanings. This is no different from the usage in multiple ways of the words life, death, body, flesh, holy, and heart. So this poster contrasts the two selves. On the left side are various frames of reference by which to compare them and understand them. In the middle column is the self that we are to deny. And in the right column is the self that we are to love.

The self that we are to deny is the self that is on the throne. The self that we're to love is our new creation self that is born again, alive to God, and created in righteousness and true holiness in the image of God. If you're going to love God, you've got to love that self because it is created in the image of God and it is as Jesus is in this world. It is one spirit with Jesus Christ. So you cannot love God except you love this new creation spirit self that is your true identity. The basis of this self that we're to deny is self determination. The basis of the self that we love is Jesus determination summing up all things in Jesus Christ. A synonym of the self that we're to deny is the flesh. That's because self determination is the root of this self. It is the root of self on the throne. That is the sin nature. And that is the basis of what is our immaterial self as opposed to our carnal self meaning our bodies.

A synonym of the self that we're to love is spirit. Our new creation self is our spirit. It is born of the Holy Spirit. It is sealed by the Holy Spirit. It is where the Holy Spirit dwells. It will spend eternity in Heaven from salvation on. That is its destiny. It is as Jesus is—namely perfected in spirit. The expression of the self that we're to deny is self-centeredness in all of its various

expressions. The expression of the spirit that we are to love is the love of God and the love of others as I love myself. The attitude of the self that we're to deny is pride. Pride is the attitude basically that this is all about me. The attitude of the self that we're to love is humility. Humility says this is all summed up in Jesus. This is all about Jesus. And I'm a beneficiary of the grace of God poured out upon me through Jesus Christ and Him crucified. In reference to Jesus, the self that we're to deny has hostility. The self is the basis of the flesh and Scripture tells us that the flesh is hostile toward God. In reference to Jesus, the self that we are to love has only worship and adoration. In reference to the object that it bears witness of, the self that we're to deny bears witness of self in one way or another. The self that we're to love bears witness of Jesus in one way or another. Therefore in reference to what we glorify, the self that we're to deny glorifies itself. And the self that we're to love brings glory to Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Understanding this tale of two selves will hopefully help us to understand Scripture more clearly. It'll help us to understand what to take off. And it'll help us to understand what to put on. If we do understand those things, we'll understand our choice clothing because that is our choice in regard to kingdom attire.

Now for emphasis of that, I'm going to present three posters that summarize what we are told to put on. We are told to put on Jesus Christ in Romans 13:14. So who is this Jesus that we are to put on? Colossians 1:15 – He is the image of the invisible God. Colossians 2:9 – He is the fullness of Deity in bodily form. Hebrews 1:3 – He is the radiance of the glory of God. Hebrews 1:3 – He is the exact representation of the nature of God. Matthew 1:23 – He is Immanuel which means God with us; He is the God man. Matthew 17:5 (the Father says) – This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. He is the Son of God. Hebrews 1:2 – God has spoken to us in these latter days in His Son. He is the message of the Father God to us. John 1:14 – The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. He is the Word of God. John 14:9 – If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father. He is the likeness of God Himself. Why is that? Because of John 10:30 – The Father and I are One. In the mystery of the Trinity, He is the One God. So we put on this Lord Jesus Christ that's summarized on this poster. We do that when we pay attention, set the mind, and fix the gaze upon this Jesus because we're told to fix our gaze; behold Jesus Christ the author and perfecter of our faith.

Next poster. After putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, we're told to put on the armor of God. We're to gird our loins with truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness, shod your feet with the gospel of peace, take up the shield of faith, take the helmet of salvation, and take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. So what are we putting on when we put on the armor of God? We are in some form, in another way of looking at it, putting on the Lord Jesus Christ; because here when we put on the armor of God, what we're really doing is putting on all that we have in Jesus Christ. We have Jesus as truth. We have the righteousness of Jesus. We have the gospel of peace which is the gospel of Jesus Christ because through that gospel, we have peace with God. We have the shield of faith in Jesus Christ. We have the helmet of salvation through Jesus Christ. And we have the Word of God in written form which testifies of the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ Himself. We have all those things through Jesus Christ.

Next poster. We're told in Ephesians 4:24 to put on the new self. We do that when we pay attention, set the mind, and fix the gaze upon who we are in Christ. So we put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We put on what we have in Jesus Christ and now we put on who we are in Jesus Christ.

And we must know this if we're to know what to put on. II Corinthians 5:17 – If any man is in Christ he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come. So what has passed away? This spirit was dead to God, hostile to God. But when we were born again (which is what the red color means on this poster), blood-bought changes brought about at the moment of salvation even when I am a babe in Christ, this is who I am and this is what I look like. I am a new creation. Well, what does that look like? Ephesians 4:24 (in the KJV) – And put on the new man which after God (which means in the likeness of God) is created in righteousness and true holiness. Your new creation self, which is who you are, is depicted in red on that poster. That is your identity. That is who you are in Jesus Christ. And if you're living out of any other identification, then you're not putting on kingdom attire. You are a new man. You are a new self. You are a new creation. Your new creation has been created in righteousness and true holiness in the image of God. You are a spirit. Your spirit is born again. Your spirit is alive to God. Your spirit is indwelled by the Holy Spirit of God. Your spirit is one spirit with Jesus Christ in this world. Your spirit is as Jesus is in this world, meaning from the moment of salvation on. That's who you are. So, awake oh sleeper and get dressed in kingdom attire. You put on the Lord Jesus Christ which is Who He is, what He is, what He has done, what He is doing and what He will do. Put Him on in all His dimensions. Put on the armor of God which is what you have in Christ through Him crucified. And put on the new man which is who you are in Jesus Christ.

Next poster. So who am I? Well you have three sources of input as to who you are and you're going to put on one of these—every moment and every thought that you have. You will have my opinion which translated is, I think. Or you'll have the others' opinion which is, they say. Or you'll have God's opinion which is, it is written. My opinion when I say I think, I am self determining that I can think and determine what truth is in any situation. When I rely on others' opinion to tell me who I am, it means I have self determined that their opinion is the accurate and true one. So you never function independent of self determination even though you're relying on the opinion of others because you are determining by self that what they are saying is true. Just as Eve determined by self that what Satan said was true and as Adam determined by self that what Satan said was true. Oh, but God's opinion is different. God's opinion is it is written. You quit self determining what truth is; it is written in the Word of God and that is what truth is. I don't have to give thought to it. I don't have to listen to the opinions of others about it. So what I have presented today, hopefully, is God's opinion. Why do I say that? Because what I've presented is what is written. It tells us who you are. It tells you what you're to put on to be dressed in kingdom attire.

So may it never be that this King Who is inviting us to His wedding feast should repeat the words of the king in the story told by Jesus. In Matthew 22:11-12, that king was at the wedding feast and saw a man not dressed in wedding clothes. He was dressed in inappropriate attire for this wedding feast. Then the king asked this man, friend, how did you not come in here with wedding clothes on? Phrase the opposite, how did you come in here without wedding clothes on? And Scripture tells us that man was speechless because that man knew that he had been invited to a wedding and that man refused to come in proper attire. He had no defense for why he was not properly attired. Nor do we have at any moment in our Christian lives after salvation any defense for why we are not properly attired because Scripture tells us it is written which is

our sole determinate of what truth is. Here's what you take off and here's what you put on. And today we've reviewed what is written which is God's opinion about kingdom attire.

So my time is up and I thank you for yours.