

Wake Up and Get Dressed!

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Preacher: Paul Martin

[0:00] We're thankful to have Pastor Martin with us then to preach God's Word to us and he'll be bringing us a word from this portion of Romans.

! I'll begin in Romans 12 and verse 9 and we'll read through chapter 13. So Romans 12, 9. Love must be sincere.

Hate what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Never be lacking in zeal. But keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope. Patient in affliction.

Faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you.

[0:59] Bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another.

Do not be proud. Be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil.

Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible. As far as it depends on you. Live at peace with everyone.

Do not take revenge, my friends. But leave room for God's wrath. For it is written. It is mine to avenge. I will repay.

I will repay. Says the Lord. On the contrary. If your enemy is hungry. Feed him. If he is thirsty. Give him something to drink.

[1:57] In doing this. You will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil. But overcome evil with good. Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities.

For there is no authority. Except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently. He who rebels against the authority.

Is rebelling against what God has instituted. And those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right.

But for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right. And he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good.

But if you do wrong. Be afraid. For he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant. An agent of wrath.

[3:02] To bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore. It is necessary to submit to the authorities. Not only because of possible punishment.

But also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes. For the authorities are God's servants. Who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him.

If you owe taxes. Pay taxes. If revenue. Then revenue. If respect. Then respect. If honor. Then honor.

Let no debt. Remain outstanding. Accept. The continuing debt. To love one another. For he who loves his fellow man. Has fulfilled the law.

The commandments. Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not covet. And whatever other commandment there may be.

[4:00] Are summed up in this one rule. Love your neighbor. As yourself. Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is.

The fulfillment of the law. And do this. Understanding the present time. The hour has come. For you to wake up.

From your slumber. Because our salvation. Is nearer now. Than when we first believed. The night is nearly over. The day is almost here. So let us put aside.

The deeds of darkness. And put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently. As in the daytime. Not in orgies. And drunkenness.

Not in sexual immorality. And debauchery. Not in dissension. And jealousy. Rather. Clothe yourselves. With the Lord Jesus Christ.

[4:57] And do not think about. How to gratify. The desires. Of the sinful nature. Father. I want you to open your Bible there. To Romans chapter 13. And as you do.

Ask you a very. Important question. It's a question that may change your life. Forever. Is there something in Turkey. That makes you sleepy? Maybe. And the answer to that question is.

Maybe. There is something in Turkey called tryptophan. And tryptophan. Okay. I got to read this. Because I'll never get it straight. Helps your body produce niacin.

Which in turn helps your body produce. Serotonin. Which is that chemical in your brain. That makes you feel tired. Or sleepy. Or aids you. In your sleep. So.

You may think that by eating a lot of Turkey. That would help you sleep. But the reason you're so tired. After your Thanksgiving or Christmas Turkey.

[5:58] Is because you have. Wedged full your stomach. With carbohydrate packed food. And your body is in revolt. Saying please. We must sleep. In order to somehow digest.

All that you have packed into us. And it really has nothing to do. With the Turkey. It was. Well. Other than you. The Turkey. When you. Put all of these potatoes. And breads. And other things into your body.

That's why. You're sleeping. I think some Christians. Suffer from. A spiritual. Sluggardliness.

A spiritual. Sleepiness. They have taken. Into their spiritual life. Such a steady diet. Of the world. That they have grown. Spiritually. Lazy. Spiritual. Couch. Potatoes. They. Have.

[6:53] Overfed. On the values. Of the world. They. Have. Esteemed. The things. That the world. Treasures. They have become. Giant. Couch. Church.

Potatoes. Doing. Nobody. Any good. And only. Getting. Off. Their. Sofa. To get. Leftovers. What is. A spiritual. Sluggard. You may. Ask. Well. A spiritual.

Sluggard. The way. I am. Using. It. Tonight. Is. Someone. Who knows. The right. Thing. To do. But. Doesn't. Do it. It. Is. The woman. Who lives.

Like. She's. Of. The world. When. She is. Really. Of. Christ. It's. The young. Man. Who. Lives. In. The environment. Of. Darkness. When. He is. Really. Of. The environment. Of. Light. Did.

You see. The sun. Rise. Up. With. The sunrise. This morning. Or. If. You've. Ever. Done. That. Before.

[7:46] You know. That. Just. Before. The sun. Peaks. Over. The horizon. There. Is. This. Light. That. Appears. That. Grayish. Light. Of. Dawn. That. Early.

Morning. When. You know. The sun. Will. Be. Up. Soon. Some. Of. You. See. It. Every. Day. And. In. This. Particular. Passage. As. Paul. Writes. To. The. Christians. In.

Rome. He's. Really. Saying. To. Them. Something. Like. This. It's. Time. To. Wake. Up. In. An.

Agrarian. Culture. You. Get. Up. At. The. Break. Of. Dawn. You. Got. To. Work. When.

The. Light. Is. Up. There. No. Electricity. There. No. Way. To. Light. Your. Fields. And. So. If. The. Work. Is. Going. To. Get. Done. You. Get. Up. When. The. Light. Breaks. And. So. Paul. Saying. Look. The.

Light. Is. About. To. Break. Now. Is. The. Time. For. You. To. Get. Up. You. See. It. There. Look. At. Romans. 13. Verse. 11. I'll. Be. Reading. From. The. I'm. Sorry. Forgot. My. NIV. I know.

[8:37] You. Like. That. So. I'll. Be. Reading. From. The. ESV. It. Says. This. Besides. This. You. Know. The. Time. That. The. Hour. Has. Come. For. You. To. Wake. From. Sleep. Paul.

Says. It's. Time. To. Get. Up. I. Don't. Really. Like. What. The. ESV. Does. Here. With. The. Original. Text. It. Really. Should. Say. Something. Like. This. Maybe. Your. Bible. Has. It. Something. Like. This. Now. Do. This. It's.

Not. Besides. This. But. It's. Do. This. Knowing. The. Time. Well. When. You. See. That. Do. This. You're. Supposed. To. Ask. Do. What. And. If. You. Look. At. The. Passage. Carefully.

You. Will. See. That.

A. Sacrifice. And. So. He's. Summing up. And. Saying. Now. Do. These. Things. What. Things. Paul. Well. Present. Yourself. As. A. Sacrifice. Be. Transformed. By. The.

[9:33] Renewing. Of. Your. Mind. Make. Sure. You. Think. Of. Yourself. Correctly. Not. Too. High. And. Not. Too. Low. Find. A. Way. To. Serve. One. Another. Love. Each. Other. With. A. Genuine. Love. Love. Your. Enemies. With. An. Authentic. Love. Submit. Yourself. To. Every. Human. Governing. Authority. Whether. That's. Your. Principal. Or. Your. President. Love. Everyone. In. Dependence. Upon. The. Holy. Spirit. Paul. Says. Now. Do. These. Things. The. Time. Is. Now. To. Be. Doing. These. Things. The. Light. Has. Broken. Dawn. Is. Here. The. Day. Of. Judgment. Is. About. To. Come. So. Christian. Wake. Up. That's. What. He. Says. Do. This. Do. It. All. Do. It. Now. Do. It. With. Passion. Why? Well. He's. Very. Clear. Here. For. You. Know. The. Time. The. Hour. Has. Come. You know. When. It's. Pre. Dawn. In. Those. Moments. Before. Pre. Dawn. It's. It's. Enough. Light. To. See. A few. Things. Now.

[10:26] When. The. Lord. Returns. And. Over. That. Eastern. Sky. The. The. Glorious. Appearing. Of. Our. Lord. Jesus. Christ. In. A. Way. That. We. Cannot. Even. Fathom. In. Our. Human. Minds. But. When. The. Lord. Comes. And. The. Light. Of. His. Presence. Is. There. And. His. Judgments. Are. Made. At. That. Point. Everything. Is. Clear. Everything. Is. Seen. All. Of. Our. Secrets. Are. Laid. Bare. Before.

Him. With. Whom. We. Have. To. Do. But. Before. That. Time. When. The. Light. Is. Dawn. In. Our. Hearts. Yes. We. Battle. With. Our. Flesh. And. Yes. We. Are. In. The. World.

And. Yes. We. Have. That. Devil. That. Enemy. Against. Us. But. There. Is. Enough. Light. To. Know. What. We. Ought. To. Do. Oh. We. Can't. See. Everything. We. Can't. See. Perfectly. Off. Into. The. Horizon. But.

We. Can. See. Enough. That. We. Know. What. It. Is. It. Do. And. So. Paul. Says. That. That. Is. Why. You. Should. Get. Up. That. Is. Why. You. Need. To. Wake. Up. For. You. Know. The. Time. And. The. Hour. Has. Come. The. Sunrise.

[11:17] Is. Almost. Here. For. Salvation. Is. Nearer. To. Us. Now. Than. When. We. First. Believe. Now. That. Just. Makes. Sense. You. Are. Nearer. To. Your. Final.

Salvation. Now. Than. The. Moment. You. First. Believe. You. Nearer. To. It. Now. Than. When. I. Said. That. The. First. Time. We. Forget. That. All. Of. Humanity. Is.

Like. A. Bunch. Of. People. Who. Have. Boots. Strapped. On. To. One. Of. Those. Moving. Walk. Way. In. An. Port. And. The. You're. Born. You're. Strapped. On.

To. The. Walk. And. You're. Just. Buzzing. Along. You. Move. Your. Legs. You're. Just. Moving. Forward. You're. Moving. Along. And. You. Look. Around. World. And. You. See. People. Doing. All. Kinds. Of. Things. Try.

an end in sight. Oh, we love to confuse one another and trick one another into believing that this life is eternal and that there's much pleasure to be found in this life and we need not worry about the life to come. And so we have our balloons in our face or whatever it would be, but we're still on the walkway. And our lives keep ticking forward.

[12:22] The sands of time are sinking. My digital watch is clicking. Paul says, look, it's time to wake up. There is no time to waste. Life marches forward to that great day of Christ's great return, whether it is when we appear before him in death or when the Lord Jesus himself returns and all men will stand before him in the day of judgment. The dawn is nearly here. The morning gray is bright and the first red hues paint the sky. So Paul says, wake up. And then he follows that command with another command.

You see it there, verse 11. Besides this, you know the time that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believe the night is far gone. The day is at hand. OK, we get the idea. Then we see those two little words.

So then or your Bible might have therefore. And what Paul is doing here is piling one command on top of another. But there is a logical progression here. First you wake up, then you get dressed.

If you try to get dressed in bed, you've got a problem. I mean, maybe you've tried that. I haven't tried it personally. When I was a Boy Scout once, it was winter camping time and they suggested we put our clothes in our sleeping bag and that way they're warm in the morning. And that was really difficult to do. To get your jeans on, on top of your long underwear, in a sleeping bag was a challenge. So I don't suggest that. Most time you have clothes that you wear to bed and then you have clothes that you wear to work or to school or to life, whatever it is the Lord has called you to. So Paul begins this section by saying, therefore, or so then, having woken up, now get dressed. What does it mean to get dressed? Well, everyone has a routine they follow generally in the

morning.

[14 : 19] And hopefully part of that routine is getting dressed. You wear clothes that are appropriate to what you're going to do that day. And that is precisely what Paul suggests that we are to do once we shake the spiritual cobwebs out of our head. And once that spiritual tryptophan has released and gone away in our bodies, and you can consult your doctor to what it's supposed to do.

I don't know. That's obvious. But once it's gone and once you have a little bit of energy, Paul says, now's the time to wake up. Now's the time to get dressed. Now, I'm going to explain to you tonight how it is you are to get dressed. Apparently, none of you had a problem with it.

You all look well-dressed tonight. That's excellent. But there are two parts to getting dressed.

Number one, you take off your night clothes. And then number two, you put on your day clothes.

Shall I explain that again? Hopefully, you will follow along. Paul says two things here. Number one, put off your night clothes.

One of my great fears in life is that I'm going to walk out the door in my pajamas. I have never done this. I don't know why I fear this. I can wake up at six in the morning and shower and get dressed and shaved and all ready for the day and not leave the house till 10.

[15 : 40] And I'll be walking down the driveway to my truck and quickly look to say, did I get out of my pajamas? I just have this fear that I'm going to go through the day in my pajamas.

And I have no idea why I have that fear. But if you think about it, that's a good fear to have.

Because after all, you don't want me showing up at your house in my pajamas. It would be inappropriate. It would be unseemly in so many ways.

So, the first step in getting dressed is to take off your night clothes, to lose your night shirt. You can't wear a suit over your pajamas. You can try, but it's a little bit frumpy.

It doesn't work. It doesn't work to wear both. You wear the night clothes at night, you wear the day clothes in the day. The night clothes belong in the night kind of time. The day clothes belong in the day kind of time.

Now, this putting off and this putting on idea is all through our New Testament. You read about this kind of thing in Ephesians chapter 4, where Paul tells us to put off the deeds of the flesh and to put on the deeds of the Spirit.

[16 : 43] And then in Colossians 3, it's the same putting off and putting on. This is what Christians do. And here in Romans chapter 13, Paul writes that we are to throw off, or we are to cast off, the works of darkness.

Do you see it there? Verse 12. So then, let us cast off the deeds or the works of darkness. Those actions that typify darkness.

Darkness, as Paul uses it here, is speaking about the world. The things that are of the world. Those things that typify the world. And it's evil.

Those things that are of the world. Paul says, put those things off, Christian. You would have nothing to do with those things. We are not spiritual grave diggers.

Sometimes we think as Christians, or we don't think, and we go back to our grave. You know, when you become a Christian, in the imagery of the Bible, you become a new man.

[17 : 45] You are a new person. And there is an old person. And you know the old you. The old you with its old values, and its old desires, and its old lusts, and its old sins.

And the scriptures speak about this. It's how we, as the new people. The ones who have been born again. As Christians. We're not to be going back to the old man.

Digging up that grave. Popping open the casket. And taking off those worm-eaten, stained clothes, and putting them on. With the stench of death all over them. And this is the Bible's picture for what it is when a Christian sins.

When a Christian sins, he has the stench of death all over him. And so we're not to be going back to the old man. We're not to be going back to the old ways.

And that's exactly what Paul is saying here. So then let us cast off. Throw those things away. That's the command we see here. And you can see how central to this is the whole idea of mind renewal.

[18 : 49] Wish we had time. We could trace this idea through the New Testament. And how Paul consistently talks about the need for the renewal of our minds. Your Christian life is really this kind of process.

Go back to Romans chapter 12 for a moment. Verse 2. And you see it here. Paul just in encapsulated form gives it to us. Do not be conformed to this world. Don't let yourself be poured into the mold that is this world.

All the values of the worldview of the world. Don't be conformed to the world. But be transformed by the renewing or the renewal of your mind.

And so this process that is to be taking place in your life as a Christian goes something like this. You read your Bible. And the truth of the scripture goes into the mind.

And the mind is then altered. The values that you hold. Your worldview is altered. It's changed so that you see the world differently. You accept God's truth as it is stated.

[19 : 52] That now affects your will. And your will is directed to act in a different way so that your actions are different. That's why real change is only possible for real Christians.

Other people can do some mock change. But it's not inward heart change. So in one sense what Paul is saying here in Romans chapter 13 is something like this.

Christian, get at it. Get at this work of mind renewal. Wake up. Get dressed. Put off the old ways. Are you dressed for the day, Paul says? Let's see if this mind renewal is really taking place in you. Let's see if it's really taking place in us. Are you a different Christian than you were two years ago? Can you trace out the evidences of God's grace in your life?

Can you see evidence of God at work in your heart? Changing your desires. Changing your values. Can you identify places where temptation has come and you have, with great grace, run to the cross and found mercy there in your time of need and been delivered from temptation?

[21 : 10] You know, when you have a child, you don't despise them for not being able to dress themselves. That's just something you have to teach them. We don't mock a child for not knowing how to get dressed.

But if you're a grown man and you have all your faculties and all your physical strength and abilities and you can't get yourself dressed, then people might look at you a little funny.

And in one way, Paul, in this passage, is saying, look, I'm just identifying for you what is normal Christianity. Things like a genuine love, an authentic love, serving one another, these kinds of things, death to self, living for God, these kinds of things.

This is just normal Christianity. This is not super, uber Christianity. This is normal Christianity. And he looks at these Christians in Rome and he says, are you living this way? Well, if not, wake up and get dressed.

Put off the old man. Put off the old deeds. This taking off action, Paul describes in sort of three ways. He gives a command, an explanation, and a warning.

[22 : 17] What's the command? So then, let us cast off the works of darkness. I have to cough just for a second. Sorry. This casting off that Paul talks about here, it's like, imagine yourself waking up in the morning and your pajamas are on fire.

You don't care who's around or what's taking place. You just get those things off because they're on fire. Bless my father. One day, my dad and I were up at the cottage.

It was late. We'd gotten up late that year. And I come from Canada. Yes, land of snow. And in Canada, it gets cold at the end of November, which was when we were there. The ice had not frozen at the lake yet, but it was cold.

And so we were bundled up in our big winter jackets. Park is, you know, just like staying warm. And we're out on top of water on a dock, bringing dock out of water because if you leave dock in water, ice destroys dock.

And my dad said to me, you go out to the end, and I'll stay here and undo these screws. I said, Dad, I don't think that's going to work.

[23 : 28] He said, no, no, no, no, no, trust me. And so I went out to the dock and, you know, did the screws, and I'm standing there, and the dock's starting to tip. And I'm saying, run. And he says, stay. And I said, run.

And he said, stay. And I went, ka-poosh, into the water. And it was very, very cold. Well, I was a Boy Scout, and I'd heard about hypothermia, and I knew what you were supposed to do, and that was get out of the water.

And then once you're out of the water, you're to get rid of those cold clothes because they just trapped the cold. And so in the 25 yards from the waterfront to the back door of our cottage, I had stripped essentially everything but my pants.

You have never seen a man undress as fast as I was undressing. Hat, gloves, jacket, shirt, everything. I just knew I had to get out of these freezing cold clothes. And Paul looks at you through the scriptures, and he's saying that type of thing.

You need to just be done with the deeds of darkness. Like they were on fire on you or so cold on you that you can't bear them anymore. Be done with it.

[24 : 27] Now, you might have noticed as we read through the passage that he gives three couplets, three little pairings of examples of deeds of darkness here.

This is what he says, verse 13. Let us walk properly as in the daytime. Here's the first couplet. Not in orgies and drunkenness.

Then the next one. Not in sexual immorality and sensuality. And then the next one. Not in quarreling and jealousy. So, here's the first category of the deeds of darkness Paul says to be rid of.

The first one is sexual sin. Sexual immorality and sensuality. He uses what really is a euphemism. People speak today of sleeping around.

It's that kind of thing that Paul uses here. It's sort of common, almost vulgar language. There's to be none of this with the Christian. Sensuality.

[25 : 30] The old English word for this is licentiousness. I love that. It rolls off the tongue. But I don't know what it means. So, I looked it up. And it means this. Pursuing sexual desires aggressively and selfishly unchecked by morality.

It is sexual gluttony. Unrestrained sexual gluttony. Paul says these are the deeds of darkness.

How much needs to be said about this? We are perhaps the most sexually educated and sexually immature population to ever people the globe.

But let's just be clear. Any sexual activity that is not between a husband and a wife who are married to each other, man and woman, is sexual immorality.

It is of the darkness. Might I speak to the young people for a moment? You are of that age when your hormones are activated and you are perhaps slightly aware of sexual urges.

[26 : 42] You live in a sex-saturated society. You swim in waters in this culture that excuse and promote and invite sexual immorality.

And what are you to do? Give up and give in? I think the Bible's teaching on the matter can be summed up in this phrase.

Here is how to govern yourself with members of the opposite sex. Treat every person as if they were someone else's spouse until your wedding night.

You do that. You do that and you will be safe. And you will honor the Lord. You treat every other person like they were someone else's husband, someone else's wife.

Until your wedding night when you get your own husband or your own wife. Paul says the first thing that we need to put off is sexual sin.

[27 : 47] Then he goes on. The second little couplet there is fighting. We might summarize it as fighting. Quarreling and jealousy. That word quarreling can be translated as strife or wrangling or contention.

You know what a wrangler is like. There's two kinds of wranglers. One breaks horses and the other one needs a bitten bridle on his own tongue. Think about it. Or maybe don't think about it.

Okay. It's a person that just causes trouble. It's a person by his words and by his actions is just stirring up trouble. You've been around people like this, haven't you?

Hopefully you're not one of them. A person given to quarreling. A person who is jealous, feeling bitter or suspicious because of another's perceived advantages.

The kind of envy and resentment of what others have and then fighting with your words or your fists. These are the works of darkness, Paul says. So there are sexual sins.

[28 : 49] There are fighting sins. I wonder about that first group there, though. Paul talks about orgies and drunkenness.

The word orgies can be translated like this. Reveling. I think that's a better translation. Peter says in 1 Peter 4, verse 3, these are the things that Gentiles want to do.

The word reveling means this. Lively enjoyment or celebration that involves eating, drinking, dancing, and noise. What we might call partying.

I don't mean partying like some of you are going to do tonight at the Hoax. That's a good thing. I mean the kind of partying that you might have heard about or perhaps have been at, maybe even participated in.

I've been to my share of parties. I know about that boundless energy of youth coupled with the boundless sinfulness of sin and the things that happen.

[30:01] We're not talking, children, about your nice birthday party. We're talking about things like raves or clubbing, partying in that sense of the word.

Paul says that these kinds of things, partying, sexual sin, these kinds of things are the works of darkness.

They are the dead-end grave clothes of the old man. Oftentimes Christians ask this kind of question. You know, I'm a young guy. All my friends are going to this party.

Can I go to the party too? I won't join in. Right? An interesting question. To which I would only answer this.

Don't confuse Jesus dining with tax gatherers with you jumping into the mosh pit. I think if you read your Bible carefully, you will see that Jesus was a friend of sinners.

[31:03] But he was not friendly with sin. Paul said this to the Corinthians. What partnership has righteousness with lawlessness?

What fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? These are the works of darkness.

This is what you slept in when you were living in the darkness. But Paul says, no, now you've been saved. Now you're a Christian. So now there's no more partying and sexual sin and relational infighting for you.

So there you are, Christian, in your high school. When other girls are talking badly about another girl because she has this or does that or wants this.

Well, you don't fall into that trap. You just walk away from that conversation. You take off those dead clothes. You look at them like things that are on fire. You want nothing to do with that.

[31:58] Or when the annual staff Christmas party came up this year and people are doing things. They're getting drunk and they're dancing themselves into a froth and they're flirting across the room.

You don't participate in those things. In fact, you call sin, sin. And you speak truth and light into that darkness. Or when you hear about the things that, oh, the things you might just have if you were to exercise a little sexual freedom.

A little experimentation. Oh, friend, don't swim in that dead pond. That's not what a true Christian values. You take off those old pajamas.

All these things are the things of the flesh. Paul would write to the Galatians and he would say this. Galatians chapter 5 and verse 13 or verse 16. He says, I say, walk by the spirit. You'll not gratify the desires of the flesh.

For the desires of the flesh are set against the spirit. And the desires of the spirit are set against the flesh. For these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law.

[33:04] Now, the works of the flesh are evident. Listen for them here. Sexual immorality. We just saw that. Impurity. Sensuality. There's our word again. Idolatry. Sorcery. Enmity. Strife. There it is. Jealousy.

There it is. Fits of anger. Rivalries. Dissensions. Divisions. Envy. Drunkenness. Orgies. And things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do these things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Which means if this is what you value, if this is what you cherish, if this is what you long for, you will not inherit the kingdom of God.

You're not a Christian. So all these works of darkness here are called works of the flesh, which means, Christian, when you feel prompted to participate in these types of sins, that's not the Holy Spirit's work in you.

That is your flesh, waging war against your soul. And its only desire is your permanent destruction. And so Paul then gives the warning.

[34:12] Make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. No provision. Show your flesh no care. No concern. Don't coddle it. Don't provide what it needs to live and to carry out its evil will.

In fact, cut it off. Cut off all its life. All its vigor. Don't think you can scheme and dream about all these things and not commit them. Even if you could, didn't Jesus say something about sin in your heart being equal to the outworking of that sin?

Even the man who lusts after a woman in his heart has committed adultery with her. A Christian may conclude that it is okay to be around and in parties and sexual immorality and relational fighting just as long as he doesn't take part.

Say, well, I need to be with those people. But I think that what Paul is saying here in this passage is something like this. That's like trying to wear your pajamas under your suit.

It doesn't work. You are, by being surrounded by those things, you are feeding the resident evil that is in you. Can a man take fire in his bosom and not get burned?

[35 : 26] This is the most common mistake of youth. How many young people would say, this is their question.

How far can I go? Don't you see, that's the wrong question. It's not how far can I get to the edge. You're a fool. If you walk closely to the edge, if you've ever been to the West Coast and California, you know there's certain parts of that area where the edge of the land is fenced off with signs saying danger.

Because oftentimes, because of the salt and the water and the rain, the soil is being eroded. And so if you walk right to the edge, it is likely to give way under your feet and you are going to fall to your death.

But there are Christians who say, I want to walk on the edge. Oh, I'll be fine. Fine. Until the ground gives out underneath them. And they fall to their death.

[36 : 32] Paul shows us how silly that question is. You don't pack a lunch for your lust. You don't store steak in a lion's cage.

You've got to decide upon this now. The devil is certainly going to throw opportunities your direction. No one goes through life without temptation. Newsflash. You will be tempted.

So decide now what you will do when those temptations come. Heed the words of Gandalf to the fellowship. As he clings to the cliff's edge. George, flee, you fools.

Flee. The devil is going to throw all kinds of opportunities your direction. And if you don't decide now to flee when temptation comes, you might as well be slathering peanut butter on your hand and sticking it out in the face of every dog that goes by.

You're going to get bit. It's an invitation to trouble to feed your flesh. Give that enemy no quarter, no life, no room, no forethought. Take off the nightclothes.

[37 : 42] And so I would say, if you're one of those who think that you can walk along the edge, heed the word of God, heed the word of the apostle, who says the question to ask is this, how far can I go in my closeness to Christ?

That's the question to ask. How close can I be to Jesus? And that takes us to the second point. Put on your work clothes quickly. Look at it. Verse 13. He says there, Let us walk properly as in the daytime.

Do the things that are fitting for daytime. Proper. They match. They are becoming. Fireworks are not becoming at high noon because you can't see them, so you have to wait until it's dark.

They don't match. They don't fit. Wearing pajamas to work is unseemly. It's inappropriate. It doesn't fit. Paul says that Christians are to walk or to conduct themselves with actions that fit daytime kind of living.

Have you ever been to a dance club? We have lots of them in Toronto. Ever driven by or been in one on the morning after? It is quite a thing. And you look about and see stuff.

[39 : 01] I won't go into it. But suddenly sin doesn't look so appealing anymore. Paul says, Don't you see this is what it is for you? You're a Christian now.

Your eyes have been opened. You've been given the light. You can see things for what they are. Christian, wake up. Shake out those cobwebs. Look and see what this really is. This is not life.

This is not true. This is not what we desire most, which is Christ Himself. We Christians walk in that light all the time. So when we try on the garments of darkness, we look silly.

A sin in a Christian's life is unbecoming. It doesn't match. It is unseemly. A thousand times more so than in a sinner's life. Because the Christian knows better.

And the Christian walks in the light. It just doesn't match. It's like me trying on Spud Webb's shoes. I don't know how tall Spud Webb was, but he was short, right?

[39 : 59] And I'm imagining that he wasn't a 13. That's just me. It doesn't fit. It would look funny if I put on tiny little man's shoes. It just wouldn't fit. It would be unseemly. It would be inappropriate.

And Paul says, When a Christian tries on sin, it is inappropriate.

When Lazarus stepped out of the tomb in his grave clothes, the first command from Jesus was, unbind him. Dress him appropriately.

In a way that becomes a man who is living. Take off his dead, dead man's clothes. So what is it to live as a Christian?

Paul tells us two things. Put on the armor of light. This word armor here is the same word that he used in Romans 6, verse 13. Put on the weapons of light.

Not the defensive shield and breastplate, but strap on your sword and your dagger. I remember when I was 10 and I went to see Star Wars. That's the first time anybody ever saw a lightsaber.

[41:00] When I got home, I made my own lightsaber. You got a flashlight and construction paper. And it was great until you hit something. The construction paper came off. But it was really cool to think of this sword that was made out of light.

I don't think that's what Paul was talking about here. But he is talking about having a weapon here. Now, there are tools and there are weapons. And you can rake with a spear if you want to, and you can kill a man with a rake if you want to, but it's highly ineffective.

And so you use the right thing for the right job. And so Paul is saying here, a Christian, listen now, wake up, shed all these acts of darkness, but now get dressed in your light suit.

Put on those actions that are meant to accomplish good in the world. That's what we wear. You don't run to battle in your bathrobe. You strap on your sword. And our sword and our shield are the works of light.

You see that Paul doesn't tell us what those things are. Or does he? Verse 14. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

[42:13] Don't those six words really just sum up everything that was read for us from Romans 12 verse 9 all the way down to the end of this passage. Put him on. Be like him.

Do his things. Think his thoughts. Use his words. Value his values. Cherish him. I think this is better than just a list of things of do this, do this.

No, he says put on Christ. Your calling then, as one who has been awakened from a deep spiritual sleep, is to take off the clothes of the night and to put on our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, who himself is the light of the world.

But you won't wear what you don't love. Some of you got a Christmas present. And you smiled and he said, oh, thank you.

And you were thinking, I wouldn't wear this in a million years. You can't wait to take that back to the store and get a credit. And here you have been offered Jesus so many times.

[43:31] Some of you have grown up in this church. Some of you are my little nieces and nephews. And you've heard the gospel week by week. You've heard it from mom and dad. You've heard it from Sunday school teachers.

Others of you have heard it only recently. But you've heard about Jesus who saves sinners. You say, oh, it's that part and your brain turns off.

But what of you? You know, you can't test drive Jesus. You can't test drive the Christian life. It's not like some sweater you can put on and say, I want to see if I like the look and the feel of this for a while.

I'll try it out and then I'll, you know, compare. No, it's not that way with the Lord. In fact, he says, if you want to come to him, you've got to turn your back on your sin, on all your own desires, on your life.

You've got to lose your life in order to find him. So if you hear these things tonight about the deeds of darkness and you say, yeah, that's what I really do value. That's what I really do live.

[44:41] Well, that's an indicator to you that these are the things that you cherish. That your heart is not set right with the Lord. And so you must do what you've heard many, many times before.

Repent. Oh, that lovely word. Is it lovely to you? It's lovely to a Christian. For to repent is to turn away from all that sin and all that self-reliance.

And then it is to trust in the person of Jesus Christ. And the glorious news of the gospel is you can be young or you can be old. You could have heard that a thousand times.

You could be hearing it for the first time. But if in your heart of hearts you turn to the Lord in genuine repentance and in faith, he will save you. That's the kind of savior he is.

Where before you thought you were maybe test driving him and maybe, you know, a little bit of the world and a little bit of Jesus and I'll be fine. And now you begin to see that all of your actions have

been one offense and one offense after another in his face.

[45 : 47] And yet you hear him calling. Not with some voice, but to your own heart, through the power of his own spirit, looking to you tonight and saying, believe and live.

Won't you believe? Turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. And once you are saved, then you will begin to start and live Jesusly, if I might say it that way.

Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. That's when the test drive begins. And it's the rest of your life. And you will begin to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and to think and to act and to value and to love and to speak and to evaluate and to participate in everything.

In a Jesus kind of way. So Christian, wake up. The time to live for Christ for you is now. And get dressed. Take off the deeds of darkness.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. To the glory of his great name. Make 2007 a year like no other.

Where you live for the Lord with all of your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength.

[47 : 05] To his great glory. Let us pray. We thank you, our Father, for sending your Son for sinners like us.

all we know is that we are helpless and hopeless without you we could never do enough good things to please you and yet you look at us and you see the righteousness of your son's life and death and we are staggered at that love and that mercy that you have shown us and we give you much praise forgive us, please forgive us for all of the times in the past year when we have lived worldly lives we may not have acted out things but we might have thought them or we might have acted them out we thank you that you are a God who still forgives and we pray that you would grant us grace to live for you with greater zeal than ever before in the year to come wake us up, dress us Lord in Christ alone may we know what it is may we know what it is to walk day by day with our master and our savior in whose name we pray amen