

引言 INTRODUCTION

Home-improvement projects improve the quality of living and the value of your house. As the weather is warming up, people will start working in the yard. They cut off dead branches, blow off fallen leaves and spread lawn fertilizer. Others may do some deep cleaning, paint walls or rearrange furniture. People feel good when places look new. That reminds me of a reality show called the “Extreme Makeover.” Producers look for people who desperately need to remodel their home. However, they are unable to do so due to financial reasons. Those owners may be a single-mom who has a limited income, a disabled veteran who relies on social benefits or a retired couple with not much savings. They will be sent away for a paid-vacation while the construction crew works on the house. In some cases, the building is in such a bad shape that it will be completely demolished. A brand-new house with some state-of-the-art facilities and appliances will be installed. When everything is done, there will be no more fear that the roof may leak or the air-conditioner may fail. Gone is the peeled-off wallpaper and the dirty carpet from the 60s. The hosts will gather relatives, friends and neighbors for a celebration on the return of the home-owners. There will be cheers and tears as the program comes to a happy ending. Who will go back to their old house when they have a new one? In reality, many people would rather cling onto the old than to enjoy the new. Many Christians are unwilling to bury their old self. Are you one of them? God has given you a new life in Christ. He also provides you the power and grace to live out that new life every day. God has changed us from the inside. It is up to us whether or not to make changes on the outside. Change begins with an intentional choice.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 老我的光景 Conditions of Our Old Self (v. 17-19)

First, let us examine the conditions of our old self before we received Jesus. We will read from **verses 17-19**. By “Gentiles,” Paul is not talking about non-Jews but non-believers. He urges his readers not to go back to their old self anymore. Paul mentions in verse 18 that non-believers are **“alienated from the life of God.”** They do not acknowledge the Creator as their Lord. They worship something else as a substitute. Nowadays, some people bow down to a statue. Others follow superstition such as feng-shui or horoscope. Many people claim that they are spiritual but not religious. They try to control an unknown force they call fate or karma for their benefits. Other people say that they are atheists. They reject all gods. But deep down inside they worship themselves. They believe that they can prevail in life until a health, financial or relational crisis hits them. When people do not abide by God’s standard of right versus wrong, they will come up with their own standard. A spiritual sin will then lead to moral sins. Paul presents a list of moral sins in this section. Verse 17 says people who do not have a relationship with God harbor **“futility of their minds.”** Their thinking process is not based on truth. Similarly, verse 18 describes that they are **“darkened in their understanding.”** Their decision-making does not rely on the light of God. Then their hearts are filled with **“ignorance”** because they reject the knowledge of God. They may look smart in front of people, but they are not wise in God’s eyes. Besides, they also suffer from a **“hardness of heart.”** It describes stubbornness when people insist on their

own way. Moreover, Paul adds in verse 19 that they have “**become callous.**” Their hearts and minds are numb to spiritual matters. People who ignore God in their judgment will embrace a secular worldview. They do things that will give them the biggest rewards. Everything is about the here and now, because there is no eternal perspective in their dictionary. Subsequently, those moral sins will appear as behavioral sins. Paul says in verse 19 that people who reject God “**have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.**” The picture is an unrestrained indulgence in sinful acts. We can think of people who are addicted to certain things like alcohol or drugs, gambling or stealing, playing computer games or chasing after money. The more the better because sin can never satisfy the deepest needs. Also, sin is always impure in nature. It is when we use substitutes to meet true needs. God defines love as a commitment between one husband and one wife. But the world advocates for having multiple partners. We need to work to get a source of income. But workaholics seek security from their careers. A home and a car are basic necessities. But some people use money and materials to define ourselves. In sum, in our old self, we use people and things to replace God. We need to recognize how bad our old self is before we will embrace our new self in Christ. Some non-believers may protest that the Bible makes unfair judgment on them. They believe that they are good people in nature. Granted, many non-Christians have more noble behaviors than believers. They donate money to support charity, and they volunteer time and effort for the society. In Taiwan, the first group of people who arrive at the scene after a major disaster are usually the Buddhists. Moreover, the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses are more zealous in sharing their gospel than most Christians. We have a lot to learn from them. But there are a few things we need to consider. First, what are the motives for their good works? There is no doubt that needy people receive help. But do they do good work just to take pride in themselves or to gain recognition from the public? Do they show kindness to accumulate brownie points, hoping to achieve salvation? God sets the ultimate standard for good, not us, others or the society.

2. 新我的光景 Conditions of Our New Self (v. 20-24)

After telling us the conditions of our old self, Paul flips the picture and describes the conditions of our new self. Let us hear the Word of God in **verses 20-24**. We went after the sinfulness of the world in the old self. But God instills His truthfulness of righteousness in our new self. After we have received a new life, we must also reveal it. How? First, we need to be **aware of our transition**. Paul describes the transition as “put off the old self” and “put on the new self.” Based on the grammar of the Greek text, that transition is a one-time process done in the past. It took place instantly when we received Jesus. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17 – **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.** There are medium-cooked steaks. But there is no 50% Christian, just like there is no 50% marriage. Suppose a man proposes to his girlfriend and says: “Let me give you half of my heart now. I’ll commit the rest when I’m ready.” No girl will marry a guy like that! Likewise, you are either completely outside of Christ or you are totally in Christ. You either have a dead soul or a new life. Seeker friends come to the church and study the Bible. Hopefully, the more they learn, the more they are convinced of the truth. Then perhaps one day they make up their mind, confess their sins and receive Jesus into their hearts. Once they are saved, they are forever saved. But if all believers have obtained a new life in Jesus, then why do we see a lot Christians who do not look quite like Christians? Salvation is a one-time change, but sanctification is a lifelong effort. Not only that we must be aware of our transition, we must also **achieve our transformation**.

There is a third step after we have put off the old self and put on the new self. Paul says we have to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. The present tense in Greek tells us that this renewal is a continuous process. Paul says earlier that our minds are polluted by our sinful nature. Therefore, there needs to be a “detox” process in our mind first before there will be behavioral changes. This transformation is brought about by the Holy Spirit. However, He will not force us to change. We must yield to Him and choose to change. God’s power is available to us when we tap into it. Nowadays, credit card companies try to keep customers with various incentives. For example, every dollar you spend will earn points. Later, you can redeem those points for cash or airline mileage. One of the cards I have will automatically extend factory warranty for another year. I know that but I always forget to use that privilege. Recently, there was a minor problem on my computer. Then I suddenly remembered the extended warranty benefit. I took the computer to a shop and had it fixed, then I submitted the bill. The credit card company reimbursed the cost fully. I said to myself at the end: “Why don’t I use this benefit more often?” The same principle applies to our spiritual life. God gives us the power to live a victorious life. We cannot win if we do not use it. It is a daily and moment-by-moment decision. We will yield to the Holy Spirit if we yearn for God’s righteousness and holiness. People of God: why do we still cling to our old self when we can freely obey God in our new self? A cowboy in an old Western movie took a bath. He washed and scrubbed his dirt. He felt good and smelled good. However, in the next scene, he put back on his dusty and sweaty clothes. He did all the cleaning in vain! We will not strive to live in our new self unless we hate our old self. Our former life before we knew Jesus is rotten in sin and it stinks. In contrast, our new life is saturated with the fragrance of Christ. Therefore, we should despise the old and desire the new!

3. 新我的樣式 Conduct of Our New Self (v. 25-32)

Those who are in Christ have been changed from the old self to the new. Paul encourages us to display that transition through our conduct. Let us continue to read **verses 25-32**. We can group those conduct into words, attitudes and actions. First, in terms of our words, Paul tells us to “**put away falsehood**” but “**speak the truth**” with one another in verse 25. God is the Lord of Truth, while Satan is the father of lies. We must represent our new Dad with truthful words. Also, in verse 29, Paul asks to stop “**corrupting talk**” but to speak something beneficial for “**building up**” others. It goes without saying that it must be based on facts, and not just empty words or vain flattering. The second group of conduct have to do with our attitudes. Besides avoiding trash talk, we must also get rid of any rash temper. Verse 26 is a good reminder: **Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger**. Anger in itself is not a sin. But anger can easily lead to sin. We can get mad without sinning. Jesus is our perfect example of righteous anger. He was mad at people’s deliberate disbelief and He was furious when people turned the temple court into a marketplace. But He did not vent His anger in sin. Paul urges us to get rid of our anger before sunset. We should not carry resentment over to the next day. Couples should resolve their conflicts before bedtime. That way the husband will not end up sleeping on a couch! Paul elaborates the point about anger in verse 31: **Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice**. You can look up the definitions for those six words in a dictionary. But altogether, they picture an outburst of violent rage. It is like a tornado sweeping through your neighborhood. There will only be chaos and destruction. Those who cannot control their anger will hurt themselves and hurt others. My parents fought a lot in my upbringing. Loud talk would escalate to shouting. Then they would use harsh words to attack

each other. They would also shift blame and even drag out dead bones to accuse the other person. We kids often lived in fear. I questioned why there was not much love between them. How can anyone treat a spouse like an enemy? Conflicts can occur in a family and between good friends. It can surely take place in the church too. May the Lord help us keep our emotions in-check. Let us address problems instead of attacking people. Rather than arguing to win, Paul gives us the best resolution. Look at verse 32: **Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.** We can love others when we truly realize how much Jesus loved us first. He sacrificed His life for us. Why can we not let go of our face for others? How much Jesus has forgiven us? Completely and instantly! That is the proper way we should forgive one another. Yes, there will still be uneasy feelings. Next time when you recall those scars, think of the wounds Jesus has on His hands and feet. His grace will overcome our grudges. Other than damaging words and attitudes, there are also negative actions. In verse 28, Paul says: **Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor...** It is possible that some readers of this letter used to steal to make a living. Paul encourages them to lead a constructive life by going to work. The general principle is that people should do good things to benefit themselves and others. They should use their mouths to build others up. They should fill their hearts with mercy and kindness. And they should use their hands to provide for themselves and to help others. Every change Paul mention begins from the church. We can love others sincerely when we treat people as brothers and sisters. Indeed, it is possible that people may not respond to your kindness with grace. You cannot change others, but you can only control yourself. You take the initiative to treat people well regardless of their reaction. That is the kind of love God shows us.

結論 CONCLUSION

Change begins with an intentional choice. We can change because God will supply the power we need. The question is whether or not we want to change. Your old self no longer exists once you are in Christ. Since then, you have to start learning how to lead a new life. Once a man noticed that he had an allergic reaction after eating peanut butter. He was puzzled by it since he never had that problem. After a series of tests, the doctor finally figured out the cause. This person had a kidney transplant not too long ago. The donor of the kidney was allergic to peanut. By receiving a kidney, the man inherited the medical issue. From now on, he had to modify his diet to cope with it. We have become a new person when we received Jesus. There must be changes on the outside due to a change on the inside. Only by the power of God can we live out our new life.

引言 INTRODUCTION

家居裝修可以提高生活品質和房屋價值。隨著天氣變暖，人們開始在院子裡工作。他們砍下枯枝、吹掉落葉、在草坪施肥。其他人可能會徹底打掃家裡、粉刷牆壁或重新擺設傢俱。當地方煥然一新時，人們會感覺很舒服。這就讓我想起一個名為《極限改造》的真人實境秀。製作人尋找一些迫切需要修建房屋的人。由於經濟原因，他們無法那樣做。那些屋主可能是收入有限的單親媽媽、依賴社會福利的殘疾退伍軍人或沒有太多積蓄的退休夫婦。他們會被送去免費渡假，然後工人便開始整修。如果房子損壞太嚴重，工人會把屋子完全拆掉。然後他們會蓋一棟全新的房子，並安裝一些新的電器。當一切都完成後，住戶就不用再擔心屋頂會漏水，或是空調壞掉。再也看不到剝落的壁紙和骯髒的六十年代地毯。當房主回來時，節目主持會聚集親戚、朋友和鄰居來慶祝。有歡呼和淚水，節目便圓滿結束。當有了新房子之後，誰還會回去舊房子？但事實上，很多人寧願抓住舊的東西，也不願享受新的。許多基督徒不願意捨棄老我。你是這樣的人嗎？神在基督裡給了你新的生命。祂也賜給你力量和恩典，使你每天都能過新的生活。神已經在裡面改變了我們，但我們必須決定是否要改變外面。改變是從決心的選擇開始。

1. 老我的光景 Conditions of Our Old Self (v. 17-19)

首先，讓我們看看自己在接受耶穌之前老我的光景。我們讀第 17-19 節。保羅所說的「外邦人」並不是指非猶太人，而是指非信徒。他告訴讀者不要回到老我。保羅在第 18 節提到，非信徒「與神所賜的生命隔絕了」。他們不承認造物主是他們的主。他們崇拜其他東西作為替代。如今，有些人向偶像鞠躬，有其他人看風水或星座。許多人聲稱他們追求靈魂的修行，但沒有宗教信仰。他們試圖控制所謂命運的神秘力量，以達到自己的利益。其他人說他們是無神論者。他們拒絕所有的神。但在內心深處，他們崇拜自己。他們相信人定勝天，直到他們遇到健康、金錢或關係的危機。當人們不遵守神的標準時，他們就會定出自己的標準。屬靈上的罪便導致道德上的罪。保羅在這段經文中列出一些道德上的罪。第 17 節說，與神沒有關係的人「存虛妄的心」。他們的思考過程不是基於真理。同樣，第 18 節描述他們「心地昏昧」。他們的決定並不根據神的真光。然後他們的心變得「無知」，因為他們拒絕認識神。他們的外表看起來很聰明，但在神眼中他們缺乏智慧。此外，他們還「心裡剛硬」，這是形容人一意孤行。此外，保羅在第 19 節說，他們的「良心...喪盡」。他們的心靈和

思想對屬靈的事情麻木。目中無神的人將接受世俗的價值觀。他們做事的動機是要為自己帶來最大的利益。一切都是為了今生，因為他們的字典裡沒有永恆。於是，那些道德上的罪就會表現在行為上的罪。保羅在第 19 節說，拒絕神的人「**就放縱私慾，貪行種種的污穢**」。這幅圖畫描繪人毫無節制地隨心所欲。我們可以想像為一些人上了癮，例如酒精或毒品、賭博或偷竊、玩電腦遊戲或追逐金錢。越多越好，因為罪永遠無法滿足人最深層的需要。而且，罪的本質總是不潔淨的。罪可以定義為使用替代品來滿足真正的需要。神將愛定義為丈夫和妻子之間的承諾，但是世界提倡擁有多個情人。我們需要工作來賺取收入，但是工作狂卻希望從事業中尋找安全感。房子和車子是必需品，但是有些人用金錢和物質來肯定自己。總個來說，老我是以人和事物來代替神。我們需要先認識到老我有多糟糕，然後才會擁抱在基督裡的新我。聽到這裡，一些非信徒可能會抗議聖經對他們做出了不公平的判斷。他們覺得自己是個好人。當然，許多非信徒比信徒有更好的行為。他們捐款支持慈善機構，並為社會貢獻時間和心力。在台灣，重大災難發生後，最先趕到現場的往往是佛教徒。此外，摩門教徒和耶和華見證人比很多基督徒更熱心地傳福音。我們有很多地方需要向他們學習。但有一些事情我們需要考慮。首先，他們行善的動機是什麼？毫無疑問，有需要的人得到幫助是好的。但他們做好事會不會只是為了炫耀自己或是得到大眾的讚賞？而且他們做好事是否為了積功德，希望以後上天堂？神設定了善的最終標準，而不是我們、別人或社會。

2. 新我的光景 Conditions of Our New Self (v. 20-24)

保羅告訴我們老我的光景之後，他翻轉畫面並描述我們新我的光景。讓我們聽聽**第 20-24 節**中神的話。我們在老我中追求世界的罪，但神將祂的正直和公義加在我們的新我中。我們得到新生命之後，也必須把它顯示出來。我們該怎樣做？首先，我們需要**意識到我們的轉變**。保羅將這個轉變形容為「脫去舊人」並「穿上新人」。根據希臘文的文法，這個轉變是過去一次性的過程。當我們接受耶穌時，這個轉變就立時發生了。保羅在哥林多後書 5:17 寫道：**若有人在基督裡，他就是新造的人，舊事已過，都變成新的了**。有半熟的牛排，但是沒有 50%的基督徒，就像沒有 50%的婚姻一樣。假設一個男孩向他的女朋友求婚說：「我先給妳一半的心。當我準備好之後，我會把剩下的也交給妳。」誰會嫁給這樣的男人！同樣，要不然你是在基督之外，要不然你就是在基督裡。要不然你的靈魂已經死去，要不然你就是擁有新生命。慕道朋友來到教會學習聖經。希望他們了解越多，就越接受真理。直到有一天他們下定決心，承認自己的罪並接受耶穌進入他們心中。他們一旦得救，就永遠得救。但如果所有信徒都在耶穌裡獲得新生命，那麼為什麼我們碰到很多看起來不太像基督徒的基督徒呢？得救是一次性的改變，但成聖是一生的功夫。我們不僅要意識到我們的

轉變，而且還必須**追求我們的改變**。當我們脫去舊人，穿上新人之後，還有第三步。保羅說，我們的心志必須更新。這個字在希臘文的現在時態告訴我們，這種更新是一個持續的過程。之前保羅說過，我們的思想被罪污染。因此，在行為改變之前，我們的思想需要進行「排毒」。這個轉變是由聖靈帶來的。然而，聖靈不會強迫我們改變。我們必須順服祂並選擇改變。神的能力隨時隨在，我們只要向神支取。如今，信用卡公司試圖透過各種好處留住客戶。例如，你可以累積點數。然後，你可以將點數換成現金或航空哩程。我有一張信用卡給予一項福利，將產品的保用期延長一年。我知道這件事，但我總是忘記使用這項特權。最近，我的電腦出現一個小問題。然後我突然想起這個福利。於是我把電腦拿到店子修理，然後申報帳單。信用卡公司全額償還了修理的費用。事後我和自己說：「為什麼我沒有經常利用這個好處？」同樣的原則也適用於我們的屬靈生活。神賜給我們力量，使我們過得勝的生活。如果我們不使用它，我們就無法得勝。這是我們每天、並每時每刻的決定。如果我們渴望神的公義和聖潔，我們就會願意順服聖靈。神的子民：我們可以在新我中自由地順服神，為什麼我們還抓緊那個老我不放呢？有一個牛仔在一部西部電影中的洗澡。他努力洗乾淨身上的污垢。之後他覺得很舒服，聞起來可能也很香。然而，在接下來的鏡頭中，他穿回沾滿灰塵、汗臭的衣服。他豈不是等於白洗了！除非我們討厭之前的老我，否則我們不會努力活出新我。在我們認識耶穌之前，我們過去的生命已經在罪中腐爛發臭。相比之下，我們的新生命充滿了基督的馨香之氣。因此，我們應該是貪新忘舊。

3. 新我的樣式 Conduct of Our New Self (v. 25-32)

那些在基督裡的人已經從舊人變成了新人。保羅鼓勵我們透過新我的樣式顯示那些改變。讓我們繼續讀 **25-32 節**。我們可以將這些樣式分為言語、態度和行為。首先，保羅在第 25 節告訴我們要「**棄絕謊言**」，並要彼此「**說實話**」。神是真理的主，而撒但是撒謊之人的父。我們必須用誠實的話反映出我們的新爸爸。此外，在第 29 節中，保羅要求我們禁止「**污穢的言語**」。那不是指罵人的話，而是一些沒有用的廢話。相反，我們應該說一些能「**造就人的好話**」。當然，我們必須根據事實，而不是講空洞的話或拍馬屁。第二組的樣式與我們的態度有關。除了避免說沒有益處的話之外，我們還必須除掉暴躁的脾氣。第 26 節是一個很好的提醒：**生氣卻不要犯罪；不可含怒到日落**。憤怒本身並不是罪，但憤怒很容易導致犯罪。我們可以生氣而不犯罪。耶穌是發義怒的完美典範。祂對人們故意的不信感到憤怒。當人們把聖殿外院變成市場時，祂也感到憤怒。但是耶穌沒有犯罪來發洩祂的憤怒。保羅也提醒我們在日落之前要除掉怒氣。我們不應該把怨恨留過夜。例如夫妻應該在睡前解決衝突。這樣丈夫就不會被趕到沙發上睡了！保羅在第 31 節中列出怒氣會產生的罪：**一切苦毒、惱**

恨、忿怒、嚷鬧、毀謗，並一切的惡毒，都當從你們中間除掉。鼓勵大家查字典找出這裡六個字的定義。但總的來說，它們描繪憤怒的爆發，就像龍捲風吹過你的家，只會帶來混亂和破壞。無法控制憤怒的人，只會傷害自己和別人。在我的成長過程中，我的父母經常吵架。他們從大聲講話升級為喊叫。然後他們就會用惡毒的言詞攻擊對方。他們也會推卸責任，甚至翻對方的舊帳。我們幾個孩子常常在恐懼之中。我質疑為什麼他們之間沒有太多的愛。怎麼他們會把愛人當作仇人？家人和好朋友之間可能會發生衝突。同樣的情形當然也可能發生在教會裡。求主幫助我們控制自己的情緒。讓我們解決問題而不是解決對方。與其為了贏而辯駁，保羅告訴我們更好的解決方案。請看第 32 節：**並要以恩慈相待，存憐憫的心，彼此饒恕，正如神在基督裡饒恕了你們一樣**。當我們真正明白耶穌先愛我們時，我們就能愛別人。祂為我們犧牲自己的生命，為什麼我們不能為別人放下自己的面子？耶穌原諒了我們多少？祂的饒恕是完全而且是立時的！那是我們應該互相寬恕的榜樣。當然，我們心裡很可能會有不舒服的感覺。下次當你想起那些傷痕時，要記住耶穌手腳上的釘痕。祂的恩典能勝過我們的怨恨。除了破壞性的言語和態度外，還有消極的行為。保羅在第 28 節說：**從前偷竊的，不要再偷；總要勞力...**。這封信的一些讀者可能曾經是小偷。保羅鼓勵他們做工來過建設性的生活。總的原則是，人們應該做正當的事，利己利人。他們應該用嘴巴來造就別人，對別人充滿憐憫和恩慈，也應該用雙手養活自己並幫助別人。保羅所提到的改變都是從教會生活開始。當我們看對方為弟兄姐妹時，我們就能真誠地愛別人。當然對方不一定以恩慈回應你的友善。你無法改變別人，你只能控制自己。但是無論別人的反應如何，你都應該主動善待他人。這就是神向我們顯示的愛。

結論 CONCLUSION

改變是從決心的選擇開始。我們能夠改變，因為神會供應我們所需的力量。問題是我們是否想改變。當你在基督裡，你的老我就不再存在。從那時起，你就要開始學習如何過新的生活。有一次，一位男士發現他吃了花生醬後出現過敏反應。他感到困惑，因為他從來都沒有那個問題。經過一連串檢查後，醫生終於找出原因。那個人不久前接受了腎臟移植手術。腎臟捐贈者對花生過敏。接受腎臟之後，那個人也繼承了過敏的毛病。從此，他必須改變飲食的習慣。當我們接受耶穌時，我們就成為了一個新人。裡面的改變必須觸發外面的改變。唯有靠著神的力量，我們才能活出新的生命。