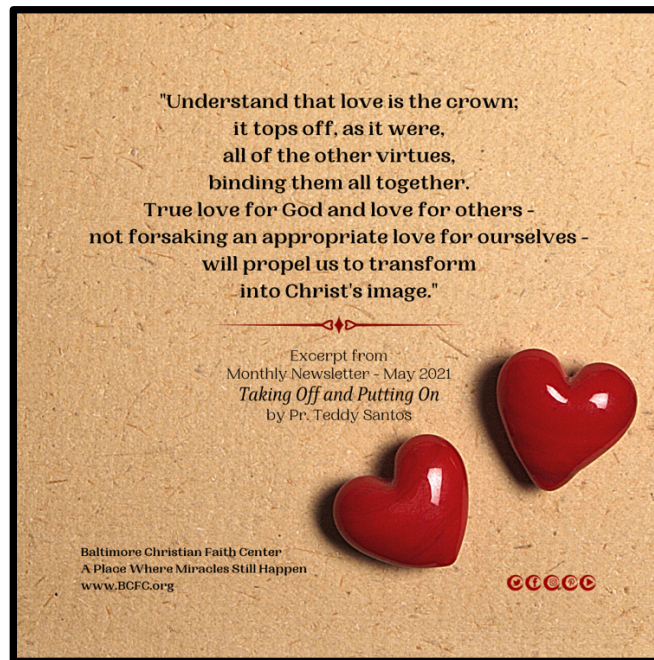


TAKING OFF & PUTTING ON Monthly Newsletter – May 2021



Colossians 3:8-16 (8) *But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. (9) Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, (10) and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, (11) where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. (12) Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; (13) bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. (14) But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. (15) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

In the verses above, we see the practical application of "*seek[ing] those things which are above*" (**Colossians 3:1**). In essence, Paul states that if we seek heavenly things, the resources will be available. They will be part of us because the Lord responds to those who are genuinely seeking Him.

Patience is a prominent component. The relationship we develop with God is not magic. It takes work; it takes development; it takes time. *2Pe 3:18 "but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* For us who have had problems with patience, understand that one must hold a tight control on oneself to keep from doing what Paul says to "put off." They are so ingrained within us that they want to break out all by themselves.

For that reason, Paul records in *Romans 7:15-23*, "*The things that I do not want to do, I do. The things I do want to do, I do not do.*" He determines that two opposing laws were working inside him. First, there was the law of his mind - which cherished God, immensely understood Him, and craved to submit to Him, to sacrifice for His name, and live a disciplined life. However, the law of his flesh - sin that resided within him - every so often reared its ugly head and broke out.

Consequently, we must discipline ourselves. We comprehend that we are to "put off" those things that do not reflect God's image and "put on" the characteristics that do. Yes, we know that "Putting on" and "taking off" is not always easy! And yes, at times, we can easily apply or overcome certain things; they seem to come quickly/naturally to us. Yet other character defects are thorns in our side, stuck deep within us, and they bring embarrassment to us from time to time and cause us to feel guilty. Periodically they even make us question whether we will be acceptable before the Lord. Perceiving this, we discern that overcoming them will necessitate a great deal of work - and work requires discipline.

Towards the end, something Paul mentions in this passage is love (*Colossians 3:14*). Understand that love is the crown; it tops off, as it were, all of the other virtues, binding them all together. True love for God and love for others - not forsaking an appropriate love for ourselves - will propel us to transform into Christ's image.

The persistent "putting on" and the "taking off" will be the evidence of seeking the Lord. Upon comprehending this, we will realize that even the ability to "put on" and "take off" is a gift from the Lord, as the means to do this come from above. Our God responds to everyone who makes Him the focus of their lives, and this is who we display. The evidence starts showing in the way we live our lives. Let us create a conscious and disciplined effort to wholeheartedly live our lives for our Master, our Lord, our King Jesus Christ!

At His service,
Pr. Teddy Santos