



UCNAVS

Name: _____



“Putting on the new self”

SANCTIFICATION

Study 1 – A New Creation

Getting Started: If someone told you that you could start over and get a fresh start in life, what would you think about that?

Intro: One of the important aspects of sanctification is that when one accepts Christ as Saviour a transforming process begins. The Holy Spirit begins to slowly change you from the inside since you are now a new person.

1. To help understand this, take a look at these verses and write your observations.

(Try looking at different bible translations for deeper understanding)

Romans 8:8-12

I Corinthians 6:9-11

Ephesians 4:22-24

2. Why can Paul expect these people to act differently?
3. Some have compared our life before Christ with being a prisoner in a cell. Before you accepted Christ the door was locked and the jailer was alive. When you accept Christ the jailer is dead and the door is open so you can leave the cell now. Yet many of us choose to stay in the cell. Why? Why do we choose to stay in sin or the cell when we have been freed from it?

This is often a problem with long-term prisoners. It is called being “institutionalized.” In other words, they are so used to prison that they do not know how to function outside of it. As a result, they commit another crime to get back into jail.

4. Why is it hard to live outside of the cell? What makes it difficult?
5. How have you experienced the “cell of sin” in your life?

6. These verses have a common theme. Now that we are a new creation we are called to be like Christ. How does each of these verses apply to that theme? Look at each of these and reflect on which have the most impact on you.

I Corinthians 11:1

II Corinthians 5:17

Galatians 2:20

Ephesians 5:8

2 Timothy 2:20-22

I Peter 1:14-16

7. What do you think it means to “be like Christ”? Is that even possible?

8. Practically what does it look like?

9. If we are called to be like Christ, then what steps can we take to continue to mature in that process?

10. Now that we are a new creation and we are free to leave the cell of sin we have to give ourselves a fighting chance at success. How do we do that and what does that look like?

11. How are you going to put that into practice?

12. Reflect personally on what the Holy Spirit is prompting you about – Pray about what needs to be done here.

Week 2 – Death to Sin

Getting Started: Have you ever experienced something in your life that you wanted to get rid of but couldn't? Maybe it was a song stuck in your head or something similar. Share your experience.

Intro: Throughout my life I (Stowe) have struggled with anger. In 2007 Sarah and I had an intense fight and I realized that something had to be done about my anger so I went to counseling. I mentioned to the counselor that I was interested in "anger management." He looked me dead in the eye and asked, "Do you want to manage this or kill this?" Wow. He went on to say that too many people try to manage their sin instead of killing it. He added that the adversary is all about managing sin because that means it is still alive in some form, yet God calls us to kill our sin.

1. Read these verses and see what they say in regard to sin in our lives or what we are going to have to do to get rid of it.

Romans 8:12-13

I Corinthians 9:24-27

Galatians 5:24

II Timothy 2:19

2. Read **Colossians 3:5-11**. What is Paul's message here in regards to sin?
3. Read **I Peter 1:23-2:1**. How does this compare to what Paul said in Colossians?
4. Finally, look at **Matthew 5:29-30**. As you read this, what is your honest reaction?
5. Do you think that Jesus is calling people to take his words literally and gouge out their eye or cut off their hand? What do you think? Should we be practicing Pirate Theology and a community lacking eyes and hands?
6. What do these verses show us about how seriously Jesus regards sin?

7. The movie *127 Hours* is the story of Aaron Ralston, a man whose arm was pinned between a boulder and a rock wall in a remote slot canyon in Utah. He survived for 127 hours but knew that his only way to avoid death was to cut off his arm. When faced with this dire situation, Ralston endured excruciating pain to free himself by cutting off his arm with a dull pocket knife. How might this real event relate to what Jesus is saying in Matthew 5:29-30?
8. What would happen to Aaron had he not cut off his arm? In truth what will happen to us if we do not take care of sin in our life?
9. How will it feel to cut off those areas of sin?
10. What are the sin areas in your life? What steps are you taking to remove them? Take some time this week to think on this.

Killing sin can be like pulling weeds. Weeds keep coming back. But while you can't eliminate them, you can minimise their effect but keeping on at them. That doesn't mean they won't grow but they are not as plentiful as they once were. Yet the minute you let up they will come back and if left unchecked will become just as invasive as they were. It is the same way with sin. We have to stay on sin. We have to keep fighting against it by keeping the pressure on. This is not an easy commitment. It is a hard one and it takes time. Hence.....

Progressive Change

The reality is that, though we desire to be changed and seek to be changed, it is not something that happens overnight. Being sanctified is a series of slow changes as you become progressively more like Christ and less like yourself.

11. Look at **John 15:1-6**. What do you see going on?
12. Describe the two types of branches from this passage and what their destination is. What is the difference between these two branches?

13. How can we really expect to make it? Look at **John 15:5**. Who is the one bringing forth the change within you?

14. Look at **John 15:6**. What do you think it looks like to bear fruit? What does pruning look like?

15. For a concluding illustration now look at **I Corinthians 5:6-8**. How might these verses relate to progressive change?

16. A friend once told me that it is “easier to lose one kg 25 times than 25 kg one time.” (actually it was pounds since I’m from the U.S.) How does this illustration relate to progressive change in sanctification?

17. How can it relate to you with what you are personally facing?

Wesley Hill in his book, *Washed and Waiting*, states it well: “Like Cain, we sometimes squirm as we relate to God. We experience him both as an unwanted presence reminding us that our thoughts, emotions, and choices have lasting consequences, as well as a radiant light transforming us gradually, painfully, into the creatures he wants us to be.”

Now that you desire to put sin to death and are progressively becoming more like Christ you have become a threat to Satan. Satan literally means “the adversary” and as such he will bring opposition against you. So stay tuned for next week.

Week 3 – Opposition and Temptation

Getting Started: Have you ever experienced opposition in your life? If so, what did it look like and how did it feel?

Opposition

1. One aspect of following Christ is opposition. What do you think some areas of opposition a believer should expect to find? From whom?
2. Read these verses. Write your observations and what/where the opposition comes from.

	Observations	What/Where the opposition comes from
I Peter 5:8-9		
I Peter 4:12-16		
John 15:19-20		
Galatians 5:17		
I Peter 2:11		
Romans 7:15-24		

3. What are your thoughts on the Romans 7:15-24 passage? Explain how you relate to it.
4. Read **Romans 7:25**. What do you think Paul meant here? What did he understand that we need to understand?
5. So having looked over these passages, where did the opposition come from?
6. Based upon this knowledge, what strategy should we take in order to oppose and fight our opposition?

Remember, now that you have chosen to reject what the adversary has to offer you are no longer neutral, but a threat. He will not remain quiet, but will instead choose to come at you or find ways to neutralize you so that you will no longer be effective. We should practice the wisdom of Mad Eye Moody who charged his students to “Constant Vigilance!” in *Harry Potter*.

Temptation

Opposition comes in many forms but the primary one is temptation of some sort.

7. Read **Matthew 4:1-11**. How did the adversary attack Jesus, what were his methods? How did Jesus react?

8. Why do you think Satan waited 40 days? What was he hoping to do?

9. What was Satan’s first temptation? Why start here?

10. If Jesus was hungry and needed food what was wrong about making it himself? How do we do the same thing?

11. What can we learn from Jesus’ response to the first temptation?

12. How did Satan differ in his approach with the second temptation? What does this tell us about Satan and his tactics? – side note, every heretic knows his bible really, really well.

13. How did Jesus respond? What does it mean to test God? Are we not called to trust him? In **Malachi 3:10** God tells the Israelites to trust him for provision. Is this testing? Explain.

14. How do we test God? What does that look like? What then does it mean for us to trust God versus test God? (note, it is fine to desire something, to want something, but we need to allow for God to color outside of that box if he desires)

15. Look at the third temptation. Was it an empty offer? Explain your answer.

16. We don't know whether Satan knew that Jesus would one day die upon the cross, but we know Jesus did. From Jesus' perspective, what was Satan offering and what could be appealing about this?

17. What are some ways that Satan offers us the "kingdom of this world"?

18. How does Jesus reaction compare to **James 4:7**? Do you believe this verse? Explain your thoughts.

19. **Read James 1:13-14**. How does this apply to what you just observed about Jesus?

20. Read **I Corinthians 10:13**. How does it relate to you?

21. What take away(s) are there for you this week?

Week 4 - Examination

Getting Started: Think of a show or movie with a court room examination scene, what does it look like to watch someone be examined by an excellent attorney?

Intro: Last week we talked about opposition and temptation. At the time of death the battle with temptation will be over and we will finally face God.

1. Read these verses and write down your observations of what happens on that day.

Proverbs 16:2, 21:2

Romans 14:10-12

I Corinthians 4:5

II Corinthians 5:10

Hebrews 4:13

2. What do these verses seem to indicate?
3. It appears nothing will be hidden from God. What are your thoughts about that? How does that make you feel?
4. As a Christian, do we need to fear the judgment of God? Share your thoughts and some verses if you have them.
5. Naturally believers wonder if we as Christians be judged for our sins. Check out these verses and write your observations.

Psalms 103:8-12

I John 1:9

6. What do these verses indicate happens to our sin?

7. Take a look at **Zechariah 3:1-5**. How is Joshua dressed and what does the adversary plan on doing?

8. What was God's reaction to the adversary's claims? What happened to Joshua's clothes?

9. When new believers were baptized in the early church they were given a white robe to wear when they emerged from the water. What do you think this robe symbolized and how does it relate to the Zechariah passage?

10. To be "righteous" is to be perfect, without fault. Therefore since Christ is our "righteousness" before God, does the believer have anything to fear? Explain your answer.

11. Who does need to fear the examination and how does this answer impact our lives?

12. What will you do with what you have learned here? Who comes to mind in our lives as you have done this study?

Week 5 – Rewards

Getting Started: Have you ever heard Christians talk about “rewards in heaven” or something similar? Explain your experience and what you think about the concept.

Intro: One aspect of the Christian life that some are either apprehensive in speaking about or too concerned about is the possibility of rewards for those who believe in Christ.

1. Read these verses and write down your observations. What are some of the repeated words/ideas?

I Corinthians 2:9

I Corinthians 9:25

I Thessalonians 2:19
(the “you” here is the Thessalonians)

Philippians 4:1

II Timothy 4:8

James 1:12

I Peter 5:4

Revelation 2:10b

2. What did you think about the constant reference to “crowns”?
3. Do you think this means that Christians will receive a literal crown or could it refer to something else?
4. Read **Matthew 25:14-23**. What appears to be the reward here?
5. The master was not concerned with the amount of talents the first two slaves had but what they did with them. Why do think this is? What can we personally apply from this?
6. Continue to read the same parable from **Matthew 25:24-30**. What happened to the third slave? Why was the master upset with him?
7. What do you think it means when the slave says, “I knew that you were a hard man, harvesting where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed”?

8. Did this knowledge impact the behaviour of the slave? What was the master's response (v 26-27)?
9. Admittedly the ending of this parable is tough with the slave being thrown "into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Honestly commentators have greatly debated what this means as these are the same images Jesus uses for those who are in hell. Though we don't know the final destination for this slave, what principle or lesson is there for us to take away from this?
10. Read **I Corinthians 3:10-15** and write your observations.
11. What did Paul say that his foundation was built upon?
12. According to Paul, is there another foundation that one can "build upon"? What is the implication of this statement?
13. In verses 12-14, Paul speaks about different materials that people build upon their foundation in Christ. There appear to be two categories. What are they and what happens to them when they are "tested by fire"?
14. What do you think these two categories of materials represent? What are some practical examples of each?
15. What practical lesson can we take from the person who invested in "wood, hay, and stubble"?
16. Does this mean that a Christian's salvation is in jeopardy? Read **Romans 8:38-39** and **John 10:28-30**. What do these verses say?
17. What things are you investing in? Do you have more "gold, silver, and precious stones" or "wood, hay, and stubble"?
18. What is an application and action step you can take away from this week?

Week 6 – Endurance and the Strength to Endure

Getting Started: Have you ever experienced something that required endurance? What did it look like?

Endurance

One aspect of the Christian faith is the call for believers to endure until the end whether that is until our death or until Christ's return, whichever comes first. This may be a new aspect of the Christian faith you may have never encountered or heard much about.

1. Read these verses below, writing your observations and thoughts.

James 1:12

I Corinthians 9:26-27

Revelation 2:25, 3:11
(The "I" here is Jesus)

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Hebrews 12:1-2

I Peter 1:6-7

2. What did you see in these verses that relates to endurance?
3. How are we to do this? What steps do we need to take in order to make this a reality?
4. We may be taking these steps to endure yet there is a voice in some people's heads wondering about their assurance of salvation. Do believers have assurance in this area? Share your thoughts.
5. Reference these verses and give your thoughts.

Romans 5:1

Romans 8:1, 8-9

Romans 8:38-39

John 10:28-30

II Timothy 4:18

Philippians 1:6

I Corinthians 1:8

6. So what do we do with this?

7. We have assurance of salvation yet are called to endure in our faith. What are your thoughts on how to handle this perceived contradiction?

Yet God does not leave us to figure it out on our own. He gives us the **Strength to Endure**.

8. Check out these verses and see what they say in regards to God giving us the strength to endure.

Romans 15:4-6

Ephesians 3:16-19

Psalm 138:8

II Thessalonians 3:3

Look at these verses again.

II Timothy 4:18

Philippians 1:6

I Corinthians 1:8

9. What does God give us to help us endure? What are ways that He aids us in this endurance?

10. Read **John 17:6-19**. This was Jesus' prayer for his disciples before he was taken into custody by the Romans to be crucified. Considering that we too are disciples of Christ, what can you take from it when you read it?

11. To Finish: What has been particularly challenging to you over this series of study? What is it that God has been teaching you or bringing to your attention?