

NEW SELF **-Ryan Parsons-**

I can remember vividly walking into the local department store just a few days before the start of middle school. Moving to a new school where 4 elementary schools merged was a big deal and a step up. It was (at least in my eyes) the “big time,” and I needed some clothes to reflect that.

I couldn't help feeling like a million bucks in my pinch-rolled stone-washed jeans, buttoned-up striped shirt with the sleeves rolled up, and white Nike high tops. However, I quickly learned two things about middle school. The first was that new clothes didn't change who I really was on the inside. Second, I learned that people will always act according to who they believe themselves to be. While I tried to present a whole new me, I was actually still just plain, old Ryan.

On the flip side, our new identity in Christ is not a superficial change. Although we are called to be clothed with Christ (Galatians 3:26-27), the transformation our new identity provides is meant to be deeper than just our outward appearance. A great deal of the New Testament focuses on helping Christians understand who they are. Why? Because, people will always act according to who they believe themselves to be.

Colossians 3

9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. **11** Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Ephesians 4

22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, **23** and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

If people still see themselves as the “old self,” they will act in that way; but, the old ways are incongruent with a new life in Christ. Paul tells the Christians in Colossae and Ephesus to change out of the old identity and put on the “new” self (νέον - recently born, young, youthful) which is “created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” As a result, this change of identity will propel them forward in a knowledge of their “newness” in Christ and in a life of action according to who they now know themselves to be.

Who do you believe yourself to be? Are you dressed up in the “new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness?”