

## The Commands and the Secret Romans 13:11-14

INTRO:

How do we live lives of personal holiness? To ask the question in another way, how can I live my life in progressive sanctification? We know the Apostle Paul told us in **Philippians 2:12-13**, *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”* We are to work out our inward salvation while God works in us to motivate us and give us the ability to be progressively conformed to the image of His Son. This is wonderful, but practically how do we do this?

Paul wrote in several places to instruct us in this process. One such place is our text for our study today. Our text includes several commands which lead us to an instruction as to how we are to live.

*I. What We Are to Do (v. 11-13)*

*II. How We are to Do It (v. 14)*

*I. What We Are to Do (v. 11-13)*

A. The Apostle Paul started unfolding how we live as living sacrifices in **Romans 12**. In **Romans 13**, we learn that part of being a sacrifice, living, holy and well pleasing to our God involved our submitting to government leaders, paying taxes and loving our neighbors as we love ourselves. Finally, Paul calls us to attention. **(Romans 13:11)**

*“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.”*

Paul’s first command is “Wake Up.” The problem was and still is that somehow, although we are converted to Christ, we do not realize how important spiritual things are. We do not recognize that living as spiritual sacrifices means changing our conduct.

B. Second, Paul wrote the Lord’s return is imminent. **(v. 12)**

*“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”*

Because the Lord’s return could be at any time, we need to put off the works of this present age and put on the armor of God. This is the first of the two “put-off” “put-on” statements in this paragraph.

C. Third, we must live differently than we lived before. There are three statements describing what we need to cast out of our lives. **(v. 13)**

*“Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.”*

## ***II. How We are to Do It (v. 14)***

A. We now know why we must do what we must do, now how do we do it? There are two steps. First, **(v14a)**

***“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ”***

1. What does this say grammatically? The word translated “*put on*” means to put on ourselves as a garment. The verb is an imperative, which means it is a command. This is not just a good idea from God. We must do this.

2. What does it mean practically? Paul uses the term to put on like a garment elsewhere. For example in **Ephesians 4:20-24**, we are told to put on the new man.

***“But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”***

We are also told to put on the armor of God in **Romans 13:12**.

This seems to mean more than this. We find the same formula in Galatians 3:27 where it refers to our salvation. The expression here is for people who already are converted but need to change their lifestyles.

Paul was not commanding a once for all experience as in salvation. Rather, he is exhorting us to do this often, I think, every day. As we put on our clothes in the morning, we must take steps to immerse ourselves in our union with Jesus Christ. This is probably our time in Bible Reading and prayer. I remember an important preacher who spoke to us in a conference who explained that it was his time with Jesus everyday which kept him going.

We cannot successfully do the negative command if we have not first, taken the positive step.

B. The second command is a negative one. **(v14b)**

***“Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”***

The second part of this open secret is to not make provision for your sinful nature to carry out its desires.

1. What does this mean? The command to not provide means we must not supply or meet the needs of the old nature. Two thoughts may be here. One is that we are not to make plans to sin. Sometimes, when a believer sins, they have thought about how they will commit that sin and how they will ask forgiveness afterward.

2. Do you remember how Hitler decided he would attack Russia in World War II? His troops got ahead of their supply lines. They could not get spare parts, winter clothes,

ammunition, or fuel to keep going. Eventually they were defeated because Hitler forgot an army travels on its stomach. Our lusts and desires are the same way. There is a chain of events that feed our lust before our desire to sin becomes stronger than our desire to obey God. We must ruthlessly cut off the supply line that feeds our lusts.

So, here are the two commands Paul demands for us. If are to wake up and put off the old sinful self and put on the new man, we must cloth ourselves in our relationship with Christ, and then ruthlessly work on rooting out our supply line that feeds our sinful flesh.