Walk Worthy
Before & After • Message 1
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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- **Pray that your life reflects the change Jesus has made in you.**
- **Ask God to reveal any areas where you are holding on to your old ways.**
- **Thank God for making you new through Jesus.**

Worship Psalm:
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

Scripture Reading:
You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.
Ephesians 4:22-31 (NIV)

A. Introduction
(Ephesians 4:22-24)

Today I want to talk about putting off the old self...

Here's the point... when faith gets into you, it always works out of you...
Said another way, there is a before and after...

Have you ever seen before-and-after photos?

Chair [show before and after pictures]

Car [show before and after pictures]

Cowboys fan [show before and after pictures]

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephesians 4:22-24 (NIV)

So we have a new self… there is a new self…

Remember, in Ephesians, there are 41 commands… 40 come from chapters 4-6 and only one in Ephesians 1-3… and that's where we are told to remember who we are… that we are chosen, adopted, and forgiven…

So we are told that our identity drives our activity… our activity doesn't drive our identity… our behaviors don't make us right with God… the blood of Jesus does…

But here's what he's saying… when we are made alive in Christ, some things will begin to change on the inside…

Years ago, when I lived in Chicago… there was a guy who shared a hobby with me, and we were getting to know each other… and he said, *Can I ask you a question? Are you religious?*… and I said, *Why do you ask?*… he said, *Because you don't swear like everyone else, and you don't talk badly about people*… and I said, *I go to church*…

Here's the point… there should be a before-and-after… you don't want people to go, *Oh, you're a Christian… I had no idea… Well, isn't that interesting*… You aren't going to be perfect, but we should be different…

So I want to show you four before-and-after changes…

B. Old Self, New Self

1. **From <u>LYING</u> to <u>HONESTY</u>.**
   (Ephesians 4:25. C/R: John 1:14; 8:44)

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.
Ephesians 4:25 (NIV)

On average, a person lies 1,460 times a year… Now here's the question… who do you think lies more, men or women?

Now, how many of you think it's women?
(And let's remember, women usually talk way more than men… and I say that because I don't want to be honest in my portion on lying)…

How many think it's men?

Survey says… women lie on average three times a day… and men lie on average six times a day… but I'm sure those numbers are way lower for Brookwood men…

And let's be honest… some of us lie, and we don't even know why… like, your spouse asks you where you are, and you just say, *I'm on my way home*… *No, you aren't… you're on aisle 4 at Lowe's… You aren't coming home…*

Sometimes people can tell stories, or just embellish, or just give those little white lies… So what's the big deal about lying… because let's be honest, we have sins in the church that we've deemed as acceptable sins… and lying seems to be one of them… Why is it such a big deal?

"He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."
John 8:44b (NIV)

The first lie ever told was in the Garden of Eden in Genesis chapter 3, and it came from Satan… So here's the thing… when you lie and are dishonest… you are literally pulling hell up…

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
John 1:14b (NIV)

Jesus is both… One thing I struggle with is: have you heard people say, *Well, I am a grace person* or *I'm a truth person*… stop saying that to excuse bad behavior… listen, you can't be a jerk in a meeting and go, *I'm just stating the facts*… or if someone is doing something ungodly or saying something wrong… you can't just go, *I'm a grace person* …

Jesus sat with sinners, which is grace, but He never endorsed their lifestyle and spoke truth…

The Bible says when you tell the truth, it sets you free… get honest with each other… but here's another thing… be honest with God… tell Him what you feel… it will free your relationship with Him…

2. **From <u>ANGER</u> to <u>FORGIVENESS</u>.**
   (Ephesians 4:26-27)

And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.
Ephesians 4:26-27 (NLT)

The word for foothold literally means a place or room… notice what it's saying… don't give the enemy any room or space in your heart or soul.

How many of you had a sibling growing up? How many of you would fight? Now, I had a sister, so I couldn't hit her. I had to use more psychological warfare… but sometimes I would chase my sister around, and she would try to run into her room… and guess what I would do? I would try to put my foot in the door… because I knew if I put my foot in the door, she was crazy enough to close it… but with my foot in the door… I couldn't get in, but with enough time and persistence, I could try to get in…

This is what Satan does with so many people. He gets a foot in… and you don't want to give the demonic or evil any entrance into your life…

Demonic Activity:
(did a whole series on spiritual warfare called *Resistance*, but let me give you a quick refresher...)

1. **Possession –** can't happen to a believer.
2. **Oppression** - demonic influence which is everywhere.
3. **Occupation-** where you give the enemy a foothold or stronghold in your life.

So with that in mind… the Bible says when you hold onto bitterness, the enemy begins to grow… My children got an ungodly amount of candy for Halloween… so when they went to sleep, I grabbed one of their bags… and what started out small, by the end, looked like a middle school boys' camp… wrappers all around.

But things just grow… and when you have bitterness… it just grows…
And that's why when the love of God gets in you, it starts to push out bitterness…

Do you know one of the most distinguishing traits of Christianity compared to all other religions… and I warn you that you will hate this… it's enemy love… (Islam and Buddhism)… we love and forgive those who wrong us… because if we don't, we become like the evil that was done to us…

Have you noticed how much anger and division are out in culture and, honestly, by people in the church? We talk about justice and Jesus flipping over tables… but let me just be honest… It's way harder to forgive an enemy than to flip over a table…

So the day of your hurt should be the day you start your healing… Start working towards making sure you don't have an enemy… Don't let those things fester…

"The pleasure of anger - the gnawing attraction which makes one return again and again to its theme - lies, I believe, in the fact that one feels entirely righteous when one is angry. Then the other person is pure black, and you are pure white."
- C.S. Lewis

3. **From <u>STEALING</u> to <u>GENEROSITY</u>.**
   (Ephesians 4:28)

Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.
Ephesians 4:28 (NIV)

One of the things we say here… is we want to honor God with our time, talents, and treasures…

Paul is going… there should be something different about how a Christian works and uses their resources…

And some of you go… I don't steal…
Let me ask you this question… How many Brookwood pens do you have at your house?!? 😊

But also, here's an interesting stat… do you know 1 out of 3 people will steal something out of a hotel room… and what about at work… we can steal time because we aren't working hard, or showing up late, or leaving early…

And the point is not about stealing… it's about generosity… it's why I also say to our church, God can't get ahold of your heart and not your wallet… because what we value, we invest time and money into…

How can I say I love God and not give anything back to Him?

What's mine is mine – selfishness.

What's yours is mine – stealing, unless it's the government… they just call it socialism.

What's mine is God's – stewardship.

Bryan note: Reference to taking a step… start with something.
Give, but pray about what the Spirit wants you to do. We want to be Spirit-led…

That's what we talk about with tithing… and it bothers me when people talk badly about tithing. Because Jesus was God's tithe… take a step… if you aren't giving, give today…

4. **From <u>UNWHOLESOME</u> words to <u>WISE</u> words.**
   (Ephesians 4:29-31)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.
Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.
Ephesians 4:31 (NIV)

There is a story that I heard this week about a boy who was at a restaurant, and he asked to pray for the food… His parents were embarrassed that he prayed aloud. A woman complained

that prayer was a disgrace, and the other kids were asking for ice cream. The boy became upset, and his cry was, *Is God mad at me?* A kind man came over and said, *Son, I happen to know God, and He told me your prayer was awesome*. The boy smiled, and his spirits shifted… *Really?*

Mom got him ice cream after dinner and said, *Ice cream is good for the soul*. The boy took a bite and then told his mom, *I have an idea.* The boy then, to his mother's horror, walked over to an older lady's table, gave her the ice cream, and said, *Mom said ice cream is good for the soul. You need this way more than I do.* The power of words…

Words can create life or destroy it. There are a lot of people who have shrapnel in their soul because of discouragement. Can I say there seems to be hesitancy to praise people?

I was watching a documentary on Mike Tyson, and his coach never wanted to praise him because he was afraid he would get complacent… so he kept saying, *We need to be perfect.* Look how well that turned out for him…

Parents are like, *I have to be tough on my kids… they need to be pushed*…
You can challenge them, but build them up…

I have heard managers say, *I don't want to praise my employees because I don't want them to get arrogant.* I've had people say, *I was going to give you some encouragement, but didn't want you to get a big head …*

Here's my whole point… many of us in marriage, church, and at work… we will give feedback freely, but we give encouragement discriminately…

Use your words to build and bless others… Don't engage in crude joking; don't be sarcastic and cut others down… stop being passive-aggressive and just build others up…