

What IS This New Life?

by Carl McMurray

Sitting in a living room at a Bible study one evening we were discussing what the “new” life of Romans 6:4 really entailed. Some of the suggestions were, “leaving the old life,” “walking with Jesus,” and “serving the Lord.” All were good answers but what do they mean in real life? How do they translate into action?

May I suggest that “walking with Jesus” in Philippians 2:14 means that we cannot be critics, grumblers, fault finders, argumentative or always trying to correct others. In verse 15 Paul says this is how we show ourselves children of light. The complaining person dims his light and is still living the old life.

Ephesians 5:33 indicates that living the new life for wives means respecting their husbands. That is incongruent with badgering, slandering, or manipulating them to do what the wife wishes. The wife who tries to run the home is still living the old life.

Similarly, Ephesians 5:23 teaches men to be leaders in their home. Leaving the wife to handle everything, make every decision, raise the children, and nag hubby even to get up and take the family to worship is living the old life. No new living can be seen here. Verse 28 indicates that he should love his wife as himself. The husband who talks down to his wife, criticizes her, slanders her to others, lays hands on her (pushing, slapping, hitting, etc. deserve a horsewhipping), or calls her names is living the old life of sin, not serving the Lord.

Colossians 3:23 reveals that the Christian should be doing his work “heartily.” With a good attitude, with good effort, honestly and diligently. The one who steals from his employer, be it tools, money, or time paid for, dims his light and shows he is still living the old life. Complaining about the blessing of a job that others would love to have demonstrates a petty lack of gratitude. Always wanting more money instead of budgeting what we have and being good stewards demonstrates worldliness and covetousness, not a new life.

Ephesians 6:1-2 speaks to young people who would put on the new life. The apostle says they should obey their parents, honoring them. This is NOT done with back talk, disobedience, grumbling, bad attitudes, arguing, or ignoring them. It is also not done by obeying them only when the child thinks things are being fair. These things are part of the old life. When we walk with the Lord things are different.

Putting on a new life may mean making new friends and losing old ones. It may mean watching our tongue as well as our attitude, because both are observable. It is a changed way of handling affairs with unpleasant people quite unlike the common ways of dealing with these things we may see every day. It is serving others, not self.

And it is tough! Don't let anyone tell you different. That's why it's called a “NEW” life, not the same old life. And that's why the Father chooses you to be His child.