



# fashion statement

If you were around in the 70's you'll remember the Safari Suit. Cool and trendy, with short sleeves and long trousers, it was practical and neat. Guys everywhere looked like they had just stepped out of a jeep on an African Safari. These days, there aren't many around. While fashions are often repeating themselves in cycles, so far this one hasn't made a comeback. When you do see someone wearing one, it's an instant reminder of another era.

In Ephesians 4:17-5:20, Paul is interested in the subject of dress sense. He tells us to “put on” certain things (4:24) - things which fit with the time in which we live - and to “take off” other things (4:22) which don't fit. His point is that because we are living in a new era we should be dressing appropriately. While Safari Suits are okay, when it comes to the outfits Paul is talking about, keeping up to date is essential!

## More than threads...

Of course, Paul's not thinking about literal clothes! He's talking about our way of life. “You were taught with regards 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 attitudes of your minds, and to put on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” This entire section is about how you should live to please God - what you should and shouldn't do and why.

## What's in, what's out and why...

In this section Paul lists at least 9 things you should do and 14 things you shouldn't. Some of them are given for you in the chart on the next page. Fill in the others from their verses.

WHAT'S IN	WHAT'S OUT
1. (4:25) Speak truthfully.	1. (4:25)
2. (4:32)	2. (4:26)
3. (5:2)	3. (4:27)
4. (5:10)	4. (4:28) Don't steal any longer.
5. (5:11)	5. (4:29)
6. (5:15) Think about how you live.	6. (4:30) Don't grieve the Spirit of God.
7. (5:18)	7. (4:31)
8. (5:19)	8. (5:3)
9. (5:20)	9. (5:4)
	10. (5:11)
	12. (5:12) Don't talk about evil behaviour.
	13. (5:17)
	14. (5:18)

1. Are there any of these verses that you don't understand? Discuss it with the group?

### A Question of Why...

2. Thinking back to study 1, the Christians Paul is writing to were once "hopeless Gentiles." But times have changed. Who should they NOT live like (4:17-20), and who should they live like instead (5:3)?

("God's holy people" in 5:3 translates the same word as "saints." Ring a bell from study 1?)

3. Have a look back at 2:19. Does this shed any light on who Paul says to live like? (If it's still not ringing any bells, there's a note in study 1 just above the heading "Here's a new thought...")

4. Paul draws a contrast in 4:20. In what way did the Ephesians learn Christ?

5. How does 4:23-24 add to this?

The focus of why we live the way we live comes back to who we are! When they trust Jesus, Gentiles are brought into the family of the saints. That means they should start living like saints. When you've been taken out of the 70's, stop wearing Safari Suits! As Paul reminds them, the message they'd heard about Jesus had called them to be different people AND to live in a different way (4:20) like God.

6. What does this say to the person who says “All my sins are forgiven through Jesus, so now I can do what I want?”

This “be who you are” principle comes up again in 5:3-8. In v3 he says there are certain things that just are NOT appropriate for God’s people to do. You’ve become a saint... so live like one! Those who don't fit with this new age (5:5), won't be able to continue in it when it fully comes! And in 5:8 there is clear talk about the age we once lived in (darkness), compared to the one we now live in (light).

### **Effort Required**

If you've ever been tempted to think that living as a Christian just happens, this passage shows what it's really like. Paul says it's just like dressing and undressing. It takes time and energy. You need to know that what you're putting on is appropriate, and what things are out of fashion. You need to dress for the occasion... and the era... that you’re now a part of. And it takes more effort than just “letting it happen.” We've got to realize that because we're Christians we live in a different age now. What clothed us before we were Christians is not appropriate for now.

### **Think it through**

Have a look back at the table of what's in and what's out. How fashionable is your life in God's eyes?

What particular areas of your life need a fashion make-over for life as a saint?