

Christ is Your Life - So Put to Death Sin

Colossians 3:4-9

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Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth... That's how the great chapter of Col 3 starts¹ and it's where we'll be again (p. 639 pew Bible).

Great time to remind us as Christian Americans right before a big election:

- There's a lot to distract your minds down below, **set your minds above**
- Vote Tuesday as citizens of heaven but **focus your hope in that kingdom**
- Providence is over presidents, **the Father's House over the White House**
- If Joe Biden will sit in the Oval Office (or not), **Jesus sits on His throne**
- We're to be thankful either way, He's in charge, **He's working His will**
- Let's praise God and **pray for who He puts in power** (Dan 2, 4, Rom 13)

Like *Therefore* in Rom 12 [QUOTE] *transformed by renewal of your mind.*

Col 3 calls us to seek and set our renewed mind on things above this earth, not be conformed to the pattern of this world, to not seek the things below, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind to know God's will for us.

v. 10 says we've *put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge ...*

⁴ *When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.* ⁵ *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* ⁶ *On account of these the wrath of God is coming.* ⁷ *In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.* ⁸ *But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.*

PRAY

INTRO: TMS professor/GCC elder— end of story I got to see the restoration. Sexual sin in the church – marriages impacted here, some no longer here. Also seen slanderous reviling abusive speech destroy marriages irreparably. The sins of v. 8 I've seen like never before in our culture and in our church.

Sins in Col 3 are deadly to relationships. If anger isn't dealt with in a heart it comes out (sometimes to others or what you say about others, now they're struggling with someone here at church). Grumbling or gossip is deadly and slander or speaking ill of others kills relationships, some may need to make things right even today. "Always be killing sin or sin will be killing you."

Indulging lust is also an epidemic problem that's grown in this pandemic. It isn't hard to see how relevant this passage is. Something on this list hits all of us.

It's not just scandalous sins, it's 'respectable sins' like inner anger or coveting. As we approach communion, sinful thinking or speaking towards others in the body is important we recognize, repent of, reconcile, forgive.

Heavenly Mind in v. 1-2

Earthly Sin in v. 5

You died to sin in v. 3

Your sin needs to die in v. 5-7

Christ is your life in v. 4

Put off your old life, v. 8-10

⁴ *When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.* That's His glorious appearing, His imminent coming (very soon, we pray). We'll be caught up and changed in a moment, twinkling of an eye – but v. 6 says wrath is coming (on unbelievers in end times). When we see Him, we'll be like Him, future transformation, so live transformed lives now

**OUTLINE: 1. The Sin to Put Off and Put to Death
2. The Source and Power – Life in Christ**

FIRST, THE SIN TO PUT OFF AND PUT TO DEATH –

⁵ *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you...* ⁸ *But now you must put them all away...*

Put away like clothes that don't fit (ADV CLUB) or worn out (FA PE shirt). I remember how I used to stink in that shirt! I needed to put it off then to be around others, now it's old and doesn't fit my new life and physique. Word in Hebrews 12 of a runner putting aside whatever entangles him or makes it hard to run. To run the race of faith we need right clothes for the occasion.

v. 9-10 says we put off the old to put on the new. v. 5 says 'put it to death.' This is the word in Acts 7 for when the religious leaders took off their robes and laid them at the feet of Saul to put Stephen to death by stoning. That's the same word and same guy writing Col 3 about putting off to put to death.

STORY - spider when I was in Congo – words for strip off fast and kill it! It's like Paul when the poisonous snake bit him and he cast it off into a fire. Or think about if you're camping – a rattlesnake on you – cast it off, kill it! I'm told even a dead rattlesnake can still bite, its fangs react (venom in still). In Acts 19 when the Ephesians came to Christ they actually threw things of their old life into a massive bonfire in Acts 19 when they repented, and Paul is saying we must do that continually with sins from our old life in v. 8-9. Or I think of The Princess Bride - giant rodent attacking Buttercup, Wesley puts it to death by putting it off in the fire, it rises up, and he stabs again 3x. Or think of a multi-headed dragon to be killed with the sword of scripture. In v. 5 we need to slay the dragon and if it rears its ugly head, slay it again. v. 5 talks about what's earthly, that means what's in our fleshly old nature.

SEXUAL IMMORALITY – any sexual act or activity outside of a husband with his wife. Grk root *porn* (English porn-ography=images of sexual sins, but the Grk word emphasizes the sexual sin itself outside of biblical marriage)

IMPURITY – related word emphasizing sexual indecency or uncleanness. It includes how impurity makes you feel dirty, defiled, filthy, shamed, stained. Greek root *acatharsis* – cathartic cleansing, unclean, need purging/purifying – the blood of Jesus can purify, cleanse us, wash us of all sin's guilty stains.

GCBC What We Teach Statement: 'We teach God designed sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (Heb. 13:4), and that departures from God's design are sinful, including adultery, fornication, homosexual or bisexual or transsexual conduct, incest, pornography, etc. (1 Thess. 4:3-8; Matt. 5:28; Rom. 1:24–32; 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:9-10; Lev. 18:1–30; Deut. 22:5). We teach while these and other sins are offensive to God, there is redemption and forgiveness through Jesus Christ for all who confess and forsake their sin to follow Christ, and we teach every forgiven sinner "in Christ" is a "new creation" (1 Cor. 6:9–11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Acts 3:19-20; Pr. 28:13; Ps. 103:3, 12; Col. 2:13–14, 3:5-10).'

1st 2 words in v. 5 are outward actions, next 3 words are inward affections:

PASSION–*pathos*–lustful passion, passionate desire (sexual context here).

Longing for or looking to see what's only for a man and wife, immodesty or nudity. All around us, visuals (billboards, pictures, TV, internet) or mental. What used to be only on magazines or shady stores is now on phones or PCs

EVIL DESIRE – even stronger longing or craving for sinful self-indulgence or self-fulfillment or self-gratifying. This generation is being killed by this spiritually, Paul says we need to kill it, all desiring pleasure apart from God

COVETOUSNESS – means greed, coveting is craving what you don't have or what your neighbor has (last of 10 commandments, 1st 2 on idolatry). It's not being satisfied with what God has given and insatiably wanting more. It can be greediness for a good thing as opposed to the last word for *evil desire*:

That's **IDOLATRY** when a good thing becomes a god – when a desire becomes a demand. It's when a craving becomes controlling. Your lust becomes your Lord. You love and want it more than God and must have it. If it rules you and you live for it, sacrifice for it and serve it instead of God alone, it's an idol. You may not bow to a statue, but what do you bend over backwards for and what are willing to do anything for? An idol can be a good thing you'll sin to get or you'll sin if you don't get it (respect, comfort -> anger).

That takes us to **the next sin list**, v. 8 *But now you must put them all away...*

ANGER – means a settled indignation, it's smoldering, simmering, stewing

WRATH – when anger blows and it goes off, it erupts, comes out, outburst

MALICE – bitterness boils over into meanness, spite, try to hurt with words

SLANDER – progresses to reviling, insults to the person or it's saying bad things to others about him behind his back, whether true or not, it's gossip

OBSCENE TALK – other translations say 'filthy language/abusive speech' (NKJV/NAS). Not just cussing or being crude, it's being rude or verbal abuse

FROM YOUR MOUTH – we can't control what comes in our mind but we can by grace control what comes out of our mouth. James says² *be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger...therefore, laying aside filthiness...*

These are verbal sins while v. 5 is visual or physical sins. The 2 lists move from sexual sins to social sins, from private to public, from what's done in secret to what's spoken openly. The first list destroys families, the 2nd list destroys church families. I've seen more of v. 8 than ever in this year 2020. Both lists are deadly to relationships. These vice lists can have a vice grip.

This is the Sin to Put Off and Put to Death (that's the 1st point). How? That takes us to the 2nd point:

2. The Source and Power – Life in Christ

⁴ *When Christ who is your life appears [key: He is your life], then you also will appear with him in glory.* ⁵ *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you ...*

Life in Christ is the key in this, not legalistic rules. Look at Col 2:21 *Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch...* ²³ *These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.*

Families with strictest legalistic patriarchy haven't stopped fleshly sins. The ultra-conservative hardcore-homeschool family-integrated Vision-Forum anti-dating movements haven't stopped indulgence of the flesh (and sadly, families and even famous leaders of those movements fell into sins of v. 5). Control doesn't stop sin, Christ alone can. Legalism can't, life in Christ can

Christ Himself said '*apart from me you can do nothing,*' but if we abide in Him and His word in the gospel abides in us, we can bear new fruit (Jn 15).

Like a branch needs the vine's life flowing through it, rely on, live in Christ.

[2 Cor 5:17 – are you in Christ? Give gospel how you can be]

Col 2 ends with what doesn't have value in stopping fleshly indulgence, but ch 3 starts with what does have value: you're raised with Christ, have life in Christ, so keep seeking things above where Christ is enthroned and exalted.

Sam Storms explains: 'Yielding to fleshly urges is overcome by "seeking" the things above. Fixing our minds on "things above" leaves little time or mental energy for earthly fantasies. The heart that is entranced by the risen Christ is not easily seduced by "the things that are on earth" (v. 2b)... fix on ...the beauty of spiritual realities as opposed to the trivial and tawdry...Why would we want our lives and thoughts and actions fixed anywhere else?...the glory and beauty and multifaceted personality and power and splendor of the risen Christ [is where] Paul directs our attention...incomparably more grand and glorious...Jesus and the grandeur of things above. This, I believe Paul would have us know, is of *great value against fleshly indulgence!*'³

Col 3:1 NIV *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts** on things above, where Christ is...* That's the source and power for our life.

Jesus said in Mk 7:21 *'from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications...adulteries, ²² deeds of coveting and wickedness... sensuality...slander...these evil things proceed from within and defile...'*⁴

He said looking with lust is already adultery of the heart (Mt 5:28)

He also said *'out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks'* (Mt 12:34 NIV).

Sometimes we say something harsh and say 'I'm sorry I didn't mean that,' but a more honest apology would be 'I'm sorry my heart overflowed!'

Then pray what we sang *'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord my rock and my redeemer'* (Ps 19:14).

The Proverb says "As [a person] *thinks in his heart, so is he*" (23:7 NKJV). We can't just fight manifestations of sin, we need to fight the motivation to sin. v. 5 starts with various fruit but ends with the root: a coveting idolatry.

Put to death means root out, radically deal with it at the root, heart of greed.

Cure to coveting: contentment in Jesus. A grateful heart cures a greedy one.

Best book on fighting lust is by Heath Lambert, *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace*. He has a whole chapter on using gratitude to fight pornography, because gratitude is the opposite of the greedy heart behind the sins of v. 5. And Eph 5 says *'there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed... but rather thanksgiving.'* He talks about a counselee named Dustin who was addicted severely but found freedom in pursuing Christ and being thankful in Him. His coveting was replaced with Christ, his greed with gratitude and gladness

A brother I helped go through that book with said that chapter really helped.

Milton Vincent: 'key to mortifying fleshly lust is to eliminate the emptiness within me and replace it with fullness... What happens to my appetites for sin when I am filled with the fullness of God in Christ?

Jesus provides this answer: "*He who continually comes to Me will never hunger or thirst again ...as I perpetually feast on Christ and all of His blessings found in the gospel, I find my hunger for sin diminishes and the lies of lust simply lose their appeal...nothing so mortifies fleshly lusts like satisfaction in Him.*"⁵

Col 3:1 'set your heart where Christ is' = 'set your mind/thoughts where He is.' 3:2 KJV '*set your affections*' and in v. 5 it has '*inordinate affection.*'

Col 3:5 moves past the fruit to the root, ends with covetous idolatrous heart. That's where the source and power is, our heart's affections reset on Christ.

In the 1800s Thomas Chalmers preached a famous sermon "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection."⁶ He argued you can't change desires for sin by willpower to stop loving the world but leaving a void in its place (or in Col 3 terms to put off without putting on something better in its place, or to try to put to death what you have affections for without a greater life and love).

Piper: 'The most effective way to kill our own sin is by the power of a superior pleasure... bondage to sin is broken by a stronger attraction — a more compelling joy... [Mt 13:44 talks about treasure in a field and a man] *from his joy...* goes and sells all that he has and buys that field discovers a reality that awakens a new affection. This new affection expels the old affections. His enjoyment of "all that he has" [before] loses its dominion...

The power at work to drive out the old affections (the love of the world) is a new power. This power is "from his joy."...Joy is the new affection...

[he argues pursuing affection in Christ is] sin-killing power...the root power of sin is severed by the power of a superior pleasure. The bondage to sin is broken by a stronger attraction—a more compelling joy...a new affection.'⁷

The verse that delivered Augustine was Rom 13:14 '*put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*' We can't just put off sin (v. 8), we need to **put on Christ as our life**, and cut off lifelines to our flesh. Col 3:5 NAS '*consider as dead to immorality...the members of your earthly body...*'— a body part or limb that needs to be amputated as gangrene sets in, cut it off before the poison spreads to the rest of the body.

We can't coddle sin, we need to kill sin. Don't feed sin, starve it to death. Deprive it of nourishment and exercise, cut off all supply lines so it dies out. Deaden, deprive, deny it life. Always be killing sin or it will be killing you.

We'll talk more about fighting sin and sins of v. 8 next time, part 2, rest of the text, but don't forget v. 6 says God's wrath comes on these sins if you don't repent and radically fight sin.

I'll let Jesus have the last word in Mt 5: ²⁹ *"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.* ³⁰ *"If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you... [like v. 5, drastic steps to deal with sin]*

What about **anger** in v. 8? A few verses earlier: *'everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.* ²³ *"Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.'*

APPLY TO COMMUNION

¹ NASB.

² James 1:19-21.

³ <https://www.samstorms.org/all-articles/post/fighting-pleasure-with-pleasure--3:1-4->

⁴ Mark 7:21-23 NASB.

⁵ Milton Vincent, *A Gospel Primer for Christians: Learning to See the Glories of God's Love*, p. 46-47.

⁶ <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/Chalmers,%20Thomas%20-%20The%20Expulsive%20Power%20of%20a%20New%20Af.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-expulsive-power-of-a-new-affection>