

## **Intro**

In life, we often want to “kill” what we see as harmful or a threat. Think mousetraps in the church. Or in your basement. Evidently we don’t like the idea of mice invading our living spaces. So we set traps. To eliminate the threat. What’s our goal? To have no more mice inside our buildings.

We don’t think of cancer as a good thing. We’re afraid of it. We think it’s destructive. So we want to destroy every trace of it. And we’ll go to whatever length necessary to eliminate it. Letting people stick needles in our veins to take blood. Being x-rayed. Letting doctors stick cameras inside us. Shaving our head. Doing radiation. Chemotherapy (medication). Opening ourselves up to side effects. Letting doctors cut us up to remove tumors.

Do we want to kill every speck of cancer in us?

Paul says have the same mindset towards sin. Paul says...

**BIG IDEA: Kill what remains of the old nature. (kill every trace)**

**READ PASSAGE (3:1-11)**

## **Body**

### **Recap**

- 1) The Christian life is all about continuing...continuing how we began...continuing with Christ at the center... continuing in faith and repentance.
- 2) The Christian life is all about moving towards maturity, completeness...no area of life untouched by God’s word.
- 3) You build on the foundation...you don’t stop at the foundation.
- 4) Methodology matters...there’s right and wrong ways to do spirituality.
- 5) Live consistent with who you are...died with Christ, raised with Christ.

### **Passage Focus**

God reconciles us to change us = maturity, completeness.

Part of the process of completeness is killing sin.

Bad methods stand in the way of killing sin (sidetracked with worshipping angels, severity to the body, questions of food and drink, questions of religious days). Sin isn’t killed when our focus is manmade regulations.

**Point 1: Kill sexual sin (3:5-7).**

*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you*

We have another “therefore.” Seek above things and set your mind on above things to kill what’s earthly.  
*sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

What is earthly is sinful behavior, specifically, sexual sin. Continuing involves killing sexual sin.

sexual immorality = any behavior that deviates from God's design of sex between a man and a woman who have become one in marriage. Premarital sex, homosexuality, adultery, prostitution, etc. Greek word is porneia from which we get pornography.

Sex isn't bad. Sex is a good and natural gift given to us by God. Misuse of sex is bad. Food is good. Food can be used poorly. The tongue is a gift from God. Ability to communicate with others is a good thing. The tongue can be used well. The tongue can do great harm. Like the tongue, sex can be a blessing or a source of pain and destruction.

Pornography in marriage. Adultery. Intimacy before marriage. Giving your heart and body to someone who isn't committed to you. Sex isn't the problem. Misusing sex is the problem. Sex is a good thing. God created it.

Sin = breaking God's commandments. Deviating from God's character which is reflected in his commandments. In the case of sexual sin, perverting God's design for sex by misusing it. Not using sex according to its function. Rebelling against God by using sex outside the boundaries he established.

Parents, teach your kids about sex so that they view sex from a biblical framework instead of the world's framework.

My parents never taught me about sex. I found out about it from peers and movies. Not a good thing. I think peers and movies are teaching harmful things about sex today. Parents, shape your kids' understanding of sex with your values.

Once read a book by Steve Farrar and he said teach your kids by age 7. He was assuming children who went to public schools. He said, instruct your kids before others do.

impurity = literal filthiness and spiritually moral filth. Used frequently by Paul alongside sexual sin (Rom 1:24; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19; 5:3; 1 Thess 4:7).

Sexual sin should disgust us like vomit.

passion = strong sexual desires. Used for sexual passions (Rom 1:26; 1 Thess 4:5).

evil desire = standard word for lust with the adjective evil. Wanting things forbidden by God's word.

What's the difference between passion and lust?

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 gives us a clue.

*For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; – 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5*

- 1) God's will = stop doing sexual immorality.
- 2) Self-control is necessary for holy and honorable living.
- 3) "*passion of lust*" = passion that stems from desire. It begins with desire and explodes into uncontrollable passion.

covetousness = greed, desire for more possessions. In context likely coveting sexual immorality.

### **How is covetousness idolatry?**

When people engage in sexual immorality, God isn't being worshipped. When people engage in sexual immorality, sin is prized over God. It's functional worship of sexual immorality. Sexual immorality has taken

the place of a person's affections rather than God. Jesus is not treated as Lord. Sexual immorality becomes lord and master.

### **Sins of the heart**

Note that the heart drives the body to commit sexual sin. Passion. Evil desire. Covetousness lead to sexual sin. The battle begins in our desires and affections (loves).

### **How do you minister to the non-Christian who's engaging in sexual immorality?**

Don't exhort them to give up their behavior. Exhort them to reflect on their rebellion against God. Don't lament their sexual sin. Lament their lack of faith and repentance.

Focus on the need for a changed stance towards God (faith and repentance) rather than changed behavior. Behavior changes when our response to God changes.

We need to be raised with Christ (born again) before we can put sin to death.

### ***On account of these the wrath of God is coming. (3:6)***

God's wrath will be a judgment on people's works (Rom 2:6). Their actions. Their behavior. Breaking God's commands necessitates God's wrath because God is holy. God can't turn a blind eye to our sin. Our sin provokes God. God is passionately opposed to sin.

Wrath = punishment God inflicts on those sentenced to hell. Romans 2:9 speaks of tribulation and distress. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 speaks of God inflicting vengeance on rebels.

### ***In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. (3:7)***

The assumption is, this is how the Colossians used to live before they with Christ. In other words, prior to the new birth our life is ruled by sin.

### **Our circumstance**

Paul says kill every trace of sexual immorality. The acts themselves. The passions that drive the behavior. Like we'd want to eliminate every trace of cancer, we need to work at removing every trace of the old nature in us.

We're not so different from the Colossians. In their culture, prostitution and homosexuality were common. Not so different from us. The problem is we're inundated with it. We even willingly bring sexual immorality into our homes.

In his Colossians commentary (written 2013), R Kent Hughes noted the following:

"It is conceivable that on a given evening of TV watching, one may see more sensual sights than one's grandparents did in their lifetimes."

The Colossians had to go outside the home to encounter sensual enticements. All we have to do in turn on our TV, phone, computer, etc.

### **How do we kill sexual sin?**

It would seem that part of Paul's remedy in Colossians is growing in wisdom and knowledge of the truth so as to open ourselves to God's glorious power (Col 1:9-11), power that can reshape our desires and so kill sinful desires. That's setting our minds on things above. God's word reshapes our hearts.

## **Proverbs 11:22**

*Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion.*

Discretion = literally evaluate with the tongue (taste); spiritually discernment: the ability to evaluate and make judgments. In Proverbs 31:18, the “excellent wife” is able to perceive (same word).

Men, the Bible doesn't deny physical beauty. But the Bible says physical beauty without discernment is masking ugliness. No one would look at the pig and only see the gold ring. Why would a man only notice the beauty without noticing the godlessness? Don't let physical beauty mask godlessness. Written to a son = don't be charmed by physical beauty. Son, take your eyes off the physical beauty and ask yourself, what would the consequences of marriage to this woman mean for you?

I apply this Proverb to myself in terms of lust. Why would I lust after someone I would never want to be married to? How should I perceive such a woman? I should be sorrowful over her lost state instead of desiring her.

Women, beware of men that lack godliness. No matter how much they flatter you. No matter how much you long for companionship.

Don't let wealth or earning power or nice home take your eyes off of the man's character. Don't lust for men that would make your life miserable because of their godlessness.

## **Non-Christian**

The wrath of God is coming because of our sins. Sexual or otherwise.

Earlier in Colossians we learned that there's forgiveness of sins (wrath escaped) and newness of life (freedom from the rule of sexual sin) through Jesus Christ. And only through Jesus Christ.

Jesus died and rose again such that whoever believes will be pardoned and saved from the wrath to come. Trust in Jesus, not yourselves.

Turn from your rebellion by trusting in Jesus' death and resurrection.

## **Point 2: Kill sinful speech (3:8-10).**

*But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. (3:8)*

“*put them all away*” = kill sinful speech. These each relate to sinful speech.

anger = same word for God's wrath in 3:7 = strong emotional displeasure, settled feeling

wrath = intense displeasure, rage; leads to passionate outbursts

malice = mean-spirited disposition against someone, strong dislike, hostility, hateful feeling

slander = word for blasphemy; towards humans meaning speaking against to ruin one's reputation, defamation of character

obscene talk = filthy talk like dirty jokes

Paul says be done with sinful speech. Note that, like sexual sin, the heart drives the mouth. Anger, wrath, and malice lead to slander. Obscene talk stems from a sexually perverse mind. A disordered heart leads to sinful speech.

***Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices (3:9)***

Another sin of the mouth: lying. Saying what is untrue. Deception. Concealing the truth. Not answering a question.

Why must lying be killed? Because you have put off the old self. This happened at the new birth. Like taking off a set of ankle weights. When you take them off, they're not weighing you down anymore. You're not hindered from walking at optimal capacity. If we're born again, we're in some sense free from the old man.

What Paul is saying is that because we've died with Christ and risen with him (first resurrection, new birth), our present existence is incompatible with the old practices of sexual sin and sinful speech.

Live what you are.

***and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (3:10)***

When we were born again, something was added. Think a person who has trouble seeing putting on glasses. Like putting on glasses improves physical sight, putting on the new man improves spiritual sight. It does more. The new self alters our desires. Leading to new practices.

## **Illustration**

The new birth is kind of like meniscal repair/surgery (torn meniscus). The restoration process has begun with present effects felt, but ongoing work required. We call it physical therapy. With physical therapy, the effects of the surgery are felt even more. Major change has taken place, but more work is necessary for the effects of the surgery to be fully felt.

When we're born again something comes off (the shackles that enslaved us to sin). Something comes on (new heart with new desires, new ability to fight sin that wasn't there before). But we're not complete with the new birth (the heart has only begun to change). The new birth is just the beginning (more heart change is necessary).

The change from the old self to the new self = a new manner of existence where we're increasing becoming more like God in our character.

**Why is it okay for God to exercise wrath but it's wrong for us?**

As Creator, judgment belongs to God. We when exercise wrath, we usurp God's role as judge.

God's wrath is good because he's punishing sin. Our wrath is bad because we're taking what belongs to God alone.

**Point 3: Kill identity in human categories (3:11).**

***Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. (3:11)***

Here is an odd transition. Where is here? The church. Where cultural identification markers fade into the background. Where Christ is all to everyone in the community. Where Christ is present inside everyone in the community.

In the world, identity is placed in ethnicity (Greek and Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised), cultural refinement (Barbarian = uncivilized, doesn't take part in Greek culture), region (Scythian = savages living North of the Black Sea), social status (slave or free).

Others might include race, political affiliation, educational level, economic status, etc. Paul says not so in the church. In the church, our identity is in Christ.

I remain white, male, American, etc. I don't lose these identities. But they recede in the background. My central identity is in Christ. I see myself as a person who's risen with Christ.

Because I'm in Christ (raised with Christ), I aim to live in accordance with above things. I strive to live what I am: in Christ = risen life. I seek to put away practice that belongs to the fallen life.

### **Application**

Paul is saying you're in Christ. Live in light of what you are. Live in light of your risen reality.

When we place our identity in Jesus, we see ourselves as who we truly are. So we have hope and confidence we'll be changed (renewed). Whether sexual sin or verbal sin or other earthly practice. We're made new.

### **Conclusion**

**Kill what remains of the old nature.**

1. **Kill sexual sin.**
2. **Kill sinful speech.**
3. **Kill identity in human categories.**