

Mortification of Sin: Lust

Colossians 3:5-7

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Colossians 3:1-11, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we come before You now, asking that You would send the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our understanding, to teach us wondrous things out of Your law, and to help us draw near to God. I pray, Father, that You would help me with the grace that is needed to proclaim Your word, to love Your people enough to tell them what You say in Your word, and I pray, Lord, that we as Your people would receive the word of truth with thanksgiving, that we would rejoice in the wisdom of God, and that we would know how to live in this day and in this age in which we are now. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

We've been considering Colossians for some time now, and we come to this very practical part of the epistle. In fact, from here on, the epistle gets extremely practical, as you can see. The focus today will particularly be on verses 5 through to verse number 7, but I thought it was important to read the entire section for our comprehension.

Now, there's a connection that is important to recognize before we move on. Several weeks back, we looked at legalism from chapter 2, verses 16 to 23, and we noted that legalism utterly fails at bringing forth true righteous-

ness into the heart of men. Look at verse number 23 of chapter number 2: "These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh." We looked at how legalism may change the outward form of a man but cannot deal with the sins that exist within man or the principle of sin that resides in man.

And then last week, we considered that what God has done is that He has taken people who have trusted in themselves and saved them by His grace. And what He's done is He's united them with Christ. You see, He has taken them, and they have died to their old life, to the old man that they used to once be. The power of sin has now been broken in their lives. They have been raised with Christ; they now live with Christ in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And this becomes a totally different way of life to legalism. This is God doing something in man that shapes the entire perspective of men.

And this is why, from there, Paul says, "Well, if you've been risen with Christ, it's not about 'do not taste, do not touch, do not handle'; it's about you seeking those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God." He says, "Set your mind on things heavenward, things above." He goes, "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

And so, Paul's intention is to show them that the way that we ought to live is to live out this union that we now have with Christ. And this is a very important point to understand because anything that we do, we must do in light of our union with Him. And that's important. If you have Jesus, He says, "A man cannot bear fruit of himself, except he abides in the vine. No more can you, except you abide in Me." And what Jesus is trying to teach us is this: that without Me, you can do nothing.

So, what God has done is that He's brought sinners into union with Christ, that from that life would flow a life of obedience. But this transition from legalism, this warning against legalism, into this union with Christ now goes into a very practical way of living, which is important for our comprehension, which is not legalism.

He says in verse number 5, "Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth." And the point that I want to make today, as we look at some practical implications about putting to death the sinful nature that is within us or the principle of sin that resides in us, what I want us to understand is that fighting against sin is not legalism. Fighting against sin is something that every Christian is to be employed in in his battle.

Now, the way that we fight sin is important. Some of those practical ap-

plications that we may apply to ourselves in our battle against sin may be very personal for some because of the particular sins by which they struggle with. And so, it's important not to take, in our battle against sin, a universal practical application for everyone. There is some universal practical application, which we'll consider, but as that plays out in the life, we'll find it's very different.

For example, just so as before we move on, if someone is saved and they're struggling with drunkenness, the encouragement to that person is, "Don't go near the RSL club." If you struggle with it and you're battling with it, don't even go into it. Now, to take that as a universal principle of holiness and apply it to everyone is not what is here. But this man, in his fight against his sin in his life, may need to apply himself very particularly.

I just wanted to make that clear as we go on, lest you take some of the things that I say as "thus says the Lord" in some of these practical applications, particularly. But what you will see is that the principles are clear in Scripture, which we must apply. And I just want to give that by way of introduction, lest you misunderstand.

But what has happened to the Christian in his life is that he is now a citizen of a new country, and we considered that last week: that he is a pilgrim and a sojourner, and he passes through this life as he seeks his God. But what is interesting about someone who is a citizen of a new country is, yes, he has a new passport, yes, he has a new status, yes, that citizen of a country – this country, you know – has all these things that are true of someone who lives in a new country.

But the thing is this: he doesn't have new habits. He has to now learn. You see, someone coming from the United States of America, he would now have to develop new habits, driving on the right side of the road. I call it the right side of the road because it is the right side of the road. And that's a struggle. He might have to get used to some new language, like "G'day mate," which he may not be so familiar with. He might have to get used to some things that he was not used to in his life that he once lived.

And what's important to recognize is that in regeneration and in our union with Christ, God has changed us so that we are now part of a new country, have a new citizenship, a new relationship, a new power over sin, a new vision, and we are seeking after God. However, the principle of indwelling sin that remained with us before our conversion still lives within us today.

And so, where the struggle is in our pilgrimage is this change of behavior. It's a process. It's sanctification. It's daily fighting. It's the putting off. It's the putting on. It's the, "Oh no, I shouldn't be doing this anymore

because I belong to that country, not this country." And this is the struggle that Christians will face throughout their pilgrimage to heaven.

And so, what Paul is simply telling us here is that we ought to put to death the old ways of living under the old citizenship that we once had and the life and the realm in which we once lived, and now live in a way that is in accordance with our status, that we are now seated with Christ Jesus in heavenly places. "Therefore, put to death these members which are upon the earth."

It was John Owen who said this: "Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you." Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you. And so, this commandment given to us in this passage is awfully clear and awfully confronting. It says, "Put to death." Put to death. What does it mean to put to death? Well, the word actually has the idea of, yes, killing, mortifying, but it also refers to the idea of depriving the power of or destroying the strength of.

And it's an important thing to understand as we're putting sin to death. It will not be ultimately killed once and for all until Jesus returns and changes this body because it is through this body that sin is committed. Rather, what we are to do is to deaden it. What we are to do is to deprive the power of sin in our lives, to destroy the strength of sin in our hearts.

Now, Paul is awfully clear as to the list of things that we ought to put to death. Look at what he says here in Colossians 3:5, "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth." Now, immediately we think, "Hang on, your members? What does that mean?" Well, "members" means your body parts. "Well, hang on a minute, what is he talking about? Is he talking about self-harm? You know, is he talking about a wrong interpretation of Matthew 5, 'cut your arm off, pluck your eyes out'?" No, that is not what Paul is referring to; otherwise, we might as well go back to Colossians 2:16-23 and live the ascetic life, which he warned us against, and basically physically afflict ourselves. But that's not what he's talking about because it doesn't deal with the indulgences of the flesh.

So, Paul is not referring to the body in terms of hurting yourself physically, and that's what it means by putting yourself to death. Now, what he's referring to is what is found following those words. Look at what it says in verse number five, "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth," then he describes it. This is an apposition to that; he says, "fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry." So, straightaway, the members that he's referring to, yes, are our physical body, but what he's trying to make us understand is this: that it is with the physical body that indwelling sin carries out its work. It is with the mind that men lust; it is with the hearts that men covet; it is with

the hands that people murder. And so, what he's simply saying is that when you're putting to death your members which are upon the earth, he's simply trying to help us understand that it is with this body that you sin. Therefore, cut off those members which are upon the earth that carry out that sin. Deal with it in the heart, all these things which are obviously mentioned here.

You see, because it's important to realize that it's through the body that sin employs to do its bidding. And this is why, in Romans 6:19, it says, "Don't yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but rather yield your members, your body, as instruments of righteousness unto godliness and unto holiness." Which means we yield our body in sin, or we yield our body in righteousness. And so, therefore, there's a strong link between the two. And in Romans 8:13, it says the same thing; it says, "mortify," and it says, "the deeds of the body." And so, I just want us to understand that the body is not intrinsically evil, but it's through the body that we commit evil.

Now, the word "put to death" straight away and quickly hits us with some implications. This command, "put to death," straight away confronts us in this epistle, and what it confronts us with, firstly, is the reality of our warfare. All of a sudden, Paul has brought in battle language. He brought in this battle language, "put to death," and what he's essentially trying to tell us is that there is a fight for life. This is a battle, a call to vigilance, a call to sobriety. If we have to put to death something, that means there is something alive in us that is not good, that is against us, that is working contrary to us, that must be slain. There is an enemy, and it's not just Satan; it's also the indwelling sin that is within us. And so, this straight away brings us into the reality of warfare.

But secondly, this command brings us also into another reality, and that is the reality of personal responsibility. He commands us to put to death the members which are upon the earth, or your earthly members. He commands us to do it. He doesn't command your brother to do it for you. He doesn't say that this is something that you can just "let go and let God," and He'll just kill sin in your life. He says in Romans 8 that you can't do this apart from Him, that it is through the Spirit that we put to death the deeds of the body. But the command is given to us to take the knife, as it were, and to slay sin. The battle and the warfare are with our engagement in our fight against sin.

There is a great danger in many lives of Christians that have this almost viewpoint that of this, "I'll just surrender to God, and all my sin will disappear." Your surrender to God looks like fighting against sin. That's what surrender to God looks like. It looks like yielding your members to God

when the sinful nature arises within you to tell you to do wrong. It looks like obedience; it looks like a yieldedness; it looks like saying no to sin and yes to Christ. That's what it means to put to death, not "let go, let God" in the sense that God will fight all the battles for me, and I won't do anything. God wants to employ your members and you in the warfare against sin as He brings you into holy living. And so, this is important to also comprehend that there is a personal responsibility incumbent upon the believer to fight in this battle, which means when you arise in the morning, you realize that there is an enemy that lives within you that you need to fight: the principle of indwelling sin.

Now, there are two lists of sin in this passage. Verse 5 lists sins of lust, which we just read before, and we'll consider today. But verse 8 also has another list of sins, which is the list of sins of anger. Next week, we'll deal with the mortification of sin regarding anger, but this week, we're going to deal with the mortification of sin regarding lust.

Now, what are the specific sins specified in this text? Well, they are sins of lust, and he says here they are: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry. Now, straightaway, you'd be thinking, "Oh yeah, this is pure for unbelievers, got nothing to do with believers." Well, no, it's actually quite the opposite. He's saying to us who have been risen with Christ, "Put to death these things that are alive in you." When I read that and studied that, that was a scary concept that within the heart of a believer lies the potential for such sins outlined in this passage. That within our hearts is the potential for these sins. This is not just something that we used to be, although we used to live that way, but the potential for falling into these sins still remains today. And this is the thing that we must be warned of and careful of and understanding of, that this is not, "I'm saved, happy-go-lucky, I'll never sin again." This is, "No, the same sins that you once committed, you may commit again."

Now, let me just make it clear: you will never be the same man you used to be in Adam because the old man has been crucified with Him; the body of sin has been destroyed. You'll never be the same man you used to be in Adam, but the propensity to sin and the possibility of sin still remains if you yield yourselves as servants to sin. And so, straightaway, this list confronts us with this scary thought that these things are still alive in us because the opposite of putting something to death means that that thing that needs to be put to death is actually living; it is alive.

Now, the list of sins here deals with fornication. He says there, which is sexual immorality, and it refers not only to physical acts of sexual immorality but also the fornication of the heart, which Jesus points out that if a man lusts after a woman, he commits adultery already with her in his heart. But

it goes beyond that even to physical sexual activity. But then he talks about the list of also in this list of uncleanness; he talks about passion; he talks about evil desire, and he talks about covetousness. And there's obviously a link between all these things that it's through an unclean heart, a heart that is contaminated with sin and with lust, that lust and wicked cravings and evil passions breed, which carry out a life of fornication, which carry out in the life of this particular sin.

But it's not limited only to fornication. The issue that he brings up here is even covetousness. And I think, in one sense, we can really just bring this all back to the two commandments, right? Loving God and loving your neighbor because there's a great link between sin and the way it carries out in our lives. But here, he says here, not only uncleanness, passion, evil desire, but he also talks about covetousness. And the tenth commandment in the scripture is, "Thou shalt not covet." But it extends not only to your neighbor's wife but also to your neighbor's goods and to other things which do not belong to you that God has forbidden you to have. It is covetousness; it is really the greed and the desire to pursue after that which is forbidden.

And covetousness, Paul calls here idolatry. And what he simply says to us is that the Tenth Commandment is really a violation of the First Commandment. That when you covet something that doesn't belong to you, you are having other gods before the God of heaven and earth as your God. You are setting up graven images, as it were, and bowing down to them when you live a life of covetousness. Paul is very frank to use the words here that covetousness is idolatry. None of us will ever think of ourselves as bowing down to a statue of Buddha or bowing down to worship the sun or the moon. But what Paul is simply saying is that when your life is governed by greed and with excess and with evil passions and evil desires and with fornication, what you are simply doing is you're erecting a statue and bowing down to it and worshiping it as God. You are bowing to the will of yourself rather than to the will of God. And this is what he says that this is really a violation of the First and the Second Commandment, and it is dangerous.

Covetousness is here in view. Now it's also important to recognize that we have a duty to kill sin in the body. We are to put it to death. I want you to look with me there in verses number five. This is, "Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." You might ask yourself, how am I to put to death these sins? And they're an awful list. It's a confronting list. It's a scary list. It makes us feel like, man, we've got some serious work to do here. Well, how am I to put to death these sins?

Well, what's important to realize first and foremost is that we are to recognize that we are not under the power of sin any longer. We have to now

think of our position in Christ Jesus. Colossians 3:1-4 is there to show us that we are not under the power and enslavement of sin any longer. Therefore, the words that should not exist in our vocabulary as Christians are the words "I cannot," the words "this is impossible," the words "this is too hard" in relation to our battle against sin. You see, that shouldn't exist in the Christian's vocabulary because God has done a work in our life to break the power of sin in our life. He has done a work in our life to raise us up with Christ to sit in heavenly places. And beyond that, Christ has so changed our disposition and our lives that we actually now have an inclination toward righteousness.

And so, what Paul is saying here is the cross triumphed over the principalities and powers. Jesus has won the victory. Sin has been broken. You've been raised with Christ through spiritual circumcision. Therefore, you do not need to listen to the master sin any longer. You don't have to answer his call. You don't have to bow to his will. You now are in a position to live out righteousness and submit to the will of God.

You see, our unbelief is really an insult to the cross in many ways. You see, Jesus died not only to save us from the penalty of sin, but He died to save us from the power of sin. And when we say that we have no power to overcome sin, when we feel so shackled and say we can't do this, it's just too hard, I might as well give up the Christian life, what we are simply doing is insulting the power of the cross in our lives. We're simply saying to God, "What You have accomplished is good in terms of my redemption, in terms of my salvation, in terms of my forgiveness, but in terms of power, in terms of holiness, in terms of righteousness, in terms of putting to death the sins of the body, oh well, it's just too hard. I'll just wait till You come again and take me out of this whole mess, and I'll just keep sinning until You come." This should not be the attitude of those who know God. We ought to be a people that recognize that we are dead to sin. This is what it says in Romans 6, "Reckon yourselves indeed dead unto sin, but alive unto God." This is something that we must reckon with. This is something that we must be convinced of.

You know, another thing we have to be also understanding of is this: we must recognize and call sin for what it is. You see, the problem with many Christians today is that we end up using a lot of euphemisms to describe our sin. We don't call our lust "fornication of the heart," or we don't call it lust. We just say, "Oh, you know, I just had these desires," or whatever it may be. We try and tone down the language to make us not feel so bad. But I think in Scripture, what we realize, even in this passage, is that Paul doesn't pull any punches, does he? It's just covetousness, which is idolatry.

Imagine they're sitting at Colossi, reading this epistle. You've just come

out of idolatry. You've just cast away all your idols. You've just followed Jesus Christ, and you've turned from idols to serve the living and true God. And now, all of a sudden, Paul says, "You know, these lives that you live of sin and of corruption and yielding yourselves and covetousness, this pursuit of things that are forbidden, you know, that is idolatry. You might as well erect the idols that you once had and bow down and worship them again because you're doing it now in your hearts with the lust of your flesh."

He said Paul doesn't pull any punches. He calls sin for what it is. And this is important for us to recognize that the Scripture doesn't pull any punches. Jesus goes as far as to say, "If you look at a woman to lust after, you commit adultery already with her in her heart." What is He trying to do? Understand the sinfulness of sin. You see, you won't kill something unless you realize that it is your enemy. When you realize the wickedness of sin, you will be more inclined to take the knife and put it to death. When you realize what it will do to you, to your family, to your home, to your life, you will put it to death.

And Satan and this world is on a mission to make people think that sin is nothing, that it is light. And this is really best illustrated in Hollywood and in movies, where it shows you this wonderful relationship between a man and a woman, that this guy is so in love that he's pursuing her, this woman is so in love with this guy that she just wants to be with him. But it doesn't show you the unaccounted pregnancies. It doesn't show you the result of adultery and how it impacts the relationship between a husband and a wife, and there may be years and years, and they never even regain the trust that has now been lost because of it. It shows you the man enjoying his drink with his drunken mates, but it doesn't show you him in the gutter. It doesn't show you the man having drugs and being excited about that night that he's snorted the cocaine or puffed that marijuana, but it doesn't show you him having this addiction, this inability to live, to function, to breathe. It doesn't show you the guy that is in prison because he wanted to make a quick buck, as it were, and go and rob someone. It doesn't show you that. And if it shows you that, it shows you that in a way that's light and makes you feel like, "Yeah, you know, this is kind of a cool life to live."

But temptation and sin always hide their hand. They don't reveal to you the full end. You see, but the Book of James is very clear about this. In James 1, it doesn't only show us what sin is, but it shows us where sin leads us to. He says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted of God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. And when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin. And sin, when it is finished, brings forth death." You know, he says what begins with lust will end in

your death.

You know, the things that we see in life, they don't show, and the way it's presented to us in media or whatever, it doesn't show us the damage that sin will cause to our entire lives, especially in our relationship toward God. And James says, "Do not, my beloved brethren, don't be deceived, don't stray." He already says, "Here is where sin begins. This is where sin will take you." He says, "Don't even be deceived by its call for you to come and submit to its will." And I think that's very important. Many of us, if we want to overcome sin and put sin to death, we have to realize its end, where it will lead us to.

You know, it was Asaph who looked upon the wicked and saw them prospering, and he said to himself, "Oh, you know, look at the life that they're living. They're so comfortable. They're so prosperous." But he said, "But when I went into the sanctuary of God I understood their end." When he had a right vision of God, the Word of God, the Word of truth, when he was there in the presence of God, he started to see life and sin and the wicked as God sees them. He says, "You've put their feet in slippery places," he says that they're despised by You, and their ultimate end is destruction. And he said, "They are consumed with terrors; they don't have rest, they don't have peace, they're troubled." And sin presents itself in that way.

And we, like Asaph, say, "Why are the wicked prospering? Look at them; they're making money, they're comfortable, they're healthy. Surely this is the way to live in this world." But go into the sanctuary of God, my friend. Open the Holy Book, read the Word of God, get in the presence of God, and you'll hate sin like God hates it. You'll see sin for what it is. You see, it was the rich man that coveted after riches in Luke 16 that, when he was in hell, he lifted up his eyes and was in torments. He said to Father Abraham, "Abraham, please send Lazarus to go back because I have five brothers, and I don't want them to come into this torment. Go, send Lazarus to go tell them about this place." You know what happened to the rich man? He realized that his pursuit of riches and covetousness, which was his idolatry, led him to the torments of hell. And it wasn't until he was in the torments of hell that he now wanted to go and tell people, "Don't come to this place. Don't worship what I worship. Don't pursue what I pursued. Seek the things which are above." He was there at the end, but it was too late, wasn't it?

Satan, who came to Adam and Eve there in the garden, said to Eve, "Oh, this fruit, don't worry. God knows that in the day you eat thereof, you're not going to die. You'll be wise, and you'll be as gods." What did he do? The temptation took the sin, the forbidden sin that God commanded them, and Satan painted it in a way that was palatable so that Eve just said, "Yeah,

that's right. It looks good. It's desired to make one wise. It looks like it's good food. I want to be like God." And she ate, gave to Adam, he ate, and the end of their sin plunged the human race into the world that we are in today, under the curse of God.

And God wants us to understand that if we are going to put to death the deeds of the body, we must remember and understand the sinfulness of sin, but not only the sinfulness of sin, where sin will lead us to. It will destroy us, and this should drive within us a heart of repentance, a godly sorrow that seeks to have an indignation against sin, as Paul outlines in 2 Corinthians 7, that desires to live for God, that doesn't want to live the way we lived before, and say, "Lord, forgive me. This is wrong. This severs my relationship with You. This affects my walk with God."

If ever you're struggling with any particular sin, as we're going through this today, I want to encourage you: pick up Psalm 51 and get a view of your sin. "Against You, and You only, have I sinned, O God, and done this great wickedness, this great evil in Your sight." David came face to face with sin, the effects of sin, the result of sin in his life, and all he could do was pour out his heart to God in repentance, saying, "I can't. It's enough. My bones are broken. My heart is sore." He says, "God, create a clean heart within me. Renew a right spirit within me, Lord. Restore unto me the joy of my salvation." We should look at that and say, "Lord, I want to continue in the joy of my salvation. I want to live for You. I want to love You." Then, my friends, see sin for what it is and put it to death in your life.

And finally, just to consider something else, we'll look at more ways to put sin to death when we look at next week in anger. But just another thing for us to have a consideration of is that if we want to put sin to death, we must cut off the supply of sin to our lives. You know, the meaning of "mortify" means to deprive the power thereof. It is to put something to death. And as someone said, to put something to death, you must cut off the supply of life to that thing. You must cut off the lines of supply.

You know, when Hezekiah was there in Judah, in the city of Judah, and the Assyrians came to judge Judah, Hezekiah commanded the people. He said, "Cut off the water to the city." Why did he ask them to cut off the water to the city? Because he knew that if the Assyrians come and encamp with all their armies around the city of Judah and they can't get any access to any water, it would only be a matter of time before their enemies would either die off or flee away. And this is an illustration to us, the people, that if we would cut off the supply of sin to our lives, we would find that we would deaden and weaken our enemies which come against us in our soul.

The children of Judah said this. They said, when they turned off all the

thing, they all agreed, all the men of Judah. They agreed, and they said this: "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find water here? Why should they come and find water here?" And let me just rephrase that for us: "Why should indwelling sin find water in our city? Why should our enemy come and find water in our city to feed itself off?"

You know, the Apostle Paul picks up this same idea in Romans 13:14, and he says to us very plainly, "Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill it in the lust thereof." You know what he simply says? "Don't feed the flesh. Don't feed the beast. Don't feed the monster. Don't feed indwelling sin. You be killing sin," as John Owen said, "or sin will be killing you."

Why should indwelling sin find itself in our city, a supply for the fulfillment of its own lusts? And this means we need to cut off things in our lives that supply indwelling sin with opportunity to express itself through our bodies. This may even go as far as your associations. The Bible is very clear about this. It says in our associations, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." It says in Psalm 1:1, "Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful." Proverbs 13:20 says, "If you are companions of wise men, you'll be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." And that simply means that if you find yourself sinning with a certain group of people because that certain group of people encourage and stir your heart to sin, you may need to find a new group of people to spend time with, people that will encourage you to do the exact opposite. It's that serious. We cut off the hand, we pluck out the eye. Well, this is not what we're going to do literally, but this is how it looks like in the life.

If you struggle in a certain place, then you need to take sin seriously and take the knife and cut that off. And when I first got right with the Lord after struggling with sin for several years, it was a very hard thing for me to do. But my friends and my cousins, we used to go out, and we used to drink, we used to smoke marijuana, things like this. And it came to the point in my life where I said, "I was trying to live for Jesus, trying to live for Christ, but I still wanted to hang out with them." And what ended up happening is like, "I'll go with them and sit with them, but I won't do anything. I'll go and sit with them, but I won't touch it." Oh, man. And then that cigarette comes around, or that joint comes around, or whatever it is, and forget it. There were times where I fell after getting right with the Lord, and I said, "I'd cry out to God, 'God, I don't want to live this way. I don't want to do this anymore.'" And I realized, you know what? I'm going to have to tell my friends, "Look, I'll hang out with you if we're not going to do those things. But if ever those things are present, I'm not going to come. I can't come. I love you guys. I don't want you to be offended by this, but

I just want you to realize that I can't live this way any longer." And it was severing those relationships, or so I say, distancing or changing the environments in which I had those relationships, that helped me day by day to take the Word of God and grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord.

And my friends, it's very important to realize that we are not strong enough, in a sense, to just sit there and see all these things. We must protect the eye gate, the ear gate. We must protect them because through there, we are tempted. And this is why even in our entertainments, we must be careful what we set our eyes upon. You know, Job said this. He said, "I made a covenant with my eyes. Why should then I look on a young woman?" You know, Job said he got covenanted with his eyes that he's not going to set his eyes upon a young woman or someone that he would lust after. So what does that look for us in the 21st century? That looks for us being careful what we watch on the television, what we put on for a movie, the places that we go, the things that the places we attend. We have to be very, very careful that if we are struggling with lust and we are in such a state where we are struggling even to turn our head, which we should learn the art of turning our head. It's a very good art for men to learn, but the discipline of that, we're struggling with those things and find ourselves falling at the sin, then we need to remove ourselves from some of those places until we find strength to be able to live in that way.

And this is important. We have to be careful by the things that cause our eyes to offend us. And if it's the music you listen to that encourages this propensity towards sin, makes you feel like you're dissatisfied with God, that there's more to life than what there is, and it's not pointing you to God, then cut it off, unsubscribe. If it's the videos that you're watching on YouTube, unsubscribe, get rid of them because it's not going to help you in your fight against sin. It's going to make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust.

You know, for some people that struggle with pornography, it's just important to put your computer screen in the middle of the lounge room or find out the times when and where you fail and be careful not to be in those situations. It may be getting a program like Covenant Eyes on your computer or whatever it is to help have accountability or asking a brother or sister in the Lord to help you with these things.

The issue is this, brother, we need to fight against sin, and we can't let sin be fed. The more you feed it, the stronger it becomes. And what begins with something small like lust becomes pornography, and then pornography becomes fornication. Little sins become big sins, and big sins kill. And we have to be very mindful of that.

1 Peter 2:11 says this, "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." Abstain, distance yourself from, separate yourself from. And like I said, that's going to look differently for each one of you as you go through your warfare. But my friend, don't worry about what people are going to think about you. Worry about sin and what it's going to do to your relationship with God and how it's going to affect your life.

Take the knife, take the sword of the Spirit, and slay sin. Put it to death in your life, whatever it is, whatever you're pursuing, whatever has grabbed your attention, whatever you have bowed down to in the week, in the months, and the last years of your life. I encourage you and urge you by the grace of God, knock down the idol, put it to death. Realize that I will serve God and not mammon. Be decisive, take the sword, and kill sin, lest it kills you and before it's too late and ruins your relationships with others, your life, and ultimately your relationship with God.

Verse number seven says, "You once lived this way, you once walked this way." Take courage, my friends, you're not the same person you used to be. Therefore, put sin to death. You died, therefore put sin to death. Be as you are in Christ Jesus, and for His glory alone. Let us pray.