

Introduction:

- “*God’s will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin.*” (1 Thessalonians 4:3, NLT)
- “*Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?*” (Romans 6:1–2, NLT)
- Today we will look at three things regarding our sanctification. Fighting the Holy War, Dying to Sin, and Living For Righteousness.

I. Fighting The Holy War

A. The Big Work: The setting/context is the work that God has done in us and the work we do living for God after He has saved us.

1. Work of God

- a) God loves. He first loved us.
- b) God pursues. Because He loves comes to us. Prevenient grace.
- c) God makes a way. Jesus (work of the cross) and Holy Spirit (God in us).

2. Work of Man: “*Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.”*” (John 6:29, NLT)

- a) Put off the old man. Eh 4:22, Col 3:9,
- b) Put on the new man in Christ Jesus. Romans 13:12,14;
- c) Renew the mind, focus on Christ
- d) Summary: God does His part and we have our part. Team effort. But we are not alone.

B. The Big War: Let’s start with the Word of God. How many of you can relate to a war that seems to be going on inside of you between right and wrong, light and darkness? That war is real. It is a real spiritual struggles with eternal consequences affecting the generations.

1. “*I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God’s law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.*” (Romans 7:21–25, NLT)

- a) “The law may discover sin, and convict of sin, but it cannot conquer and subdue sin. It discovers the defilement, but will not wash it off. It makes a man weary and heavy laden (Mt. 11:28), burdens him with his sin; and yet, if rested in, it yields no help towards the shaking off of that burden; this is to be had only in Christ.” Matthew Henery.
- b) If it were not for Christ, this iniquity that dwells in us would certainly be our ruin. He is our advocate (attorney) with the Father, and through him God pities, and spares, and pardons, and lays not our iniquities to our charge. It is Christ that has purchased deliverance for us in due time.

2. “*The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.*” (Galatians 5:17, NLT)

- a) The struggle here is like that between the Canaanites and Israelites in the land, between the house of Saul and the house of David.
- b) The fault is found in that corruption of his nature in which he did really cry over and strive against: *It is no more I that do it, but sin that lives in me.* He this mentions twice (v. 17, 20), not as an excuse for the guilt of his sin but as a set up for his evidences, that he might not

sink in despair, but take comfort from the covenant of grace, which accepts the willingness of the spirit, and has provided pardon for the weakness of the flesh.

c) The struggle or war prompts big questions.

C. The Big Questions:

1. How can I be holy and sin at the same time?
 - a) Doing right does not make you right with God. (That is based on your works alone.) Through faith in Jesus I am made right with God. This is the Christians foundation. Eph 2:8,9; Gal 3:20; John 6:29. And being made right with God leads me to want to be like Him. Therefore I enter the war to live holy to God.
 - b) If you understand who you are in Christ, you will understand and value what God the Father has done for us through Jesus Christ. Don't miss the next few weeks as this will be our topic leading up to Resurrection Sunday. Seder Suppers.
2. If I have a new nature, why do I still sin?
 - a) On the God side, we are justified, made new creations, forgiven, adopted and made holy all in one simple act of faith. This is what God did for us through His Son and we receive that by faith.
 - b) We still sin because sin is still at work in our members. [Romans 7:23]
3. How do I keep from becoming legalistic or (flip side) How do I keep from cheapening grace?
 - a) Legally: By keeping the revelation alive on your inside (of what God has done for you) and knowing it is not just a work you do but something He has done. You realize always as you see others in their sin, or in this war, that that could easily be you but for the grace of God.
 - b) Cheapening: Live always with the price that was paid for your salvation! It did not come cheap so do not take it for granted. Know that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit you are His house so make it most comfortable for Him. Do the best with what you have but always live to give Him your best.
4. What do I do in the midst of this? Two things: Die to sin, live for righteousness.

II. Dying To Sin

- A. It is a paradox fact of the Christian life that though the believer is to understand himself as “dead to sin” “*So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.*” (Romans 6:11, NLT) in that sin no longer dominates him...none the less sins do remain and we are called to die to them. This calls for the renunciation of sin.
 1. “*For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God,*” (Titus 2:11–12, NLT) Godless living are all passions not directed towards God.
 2. Jesus said it this way, “... *“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.”* (Luke 9:23, NLT) Denial of self refers to the total self that is opposed to the way of Christ. This sinful self must be put to death. The cross reflects the intensity with which we are to do that. IE. *The only person who carried the cross in the Roman world were those sentenced to die on it. In a sense, they were already dead as they carried their cross to their death!* This was not done in a restful calm way. It required vigorous action. Paradox
- B. The Holy Spirit who lives within us is totally opposed to the sinful self or in Paul’s words the flesh.
 1. Because Holy Spirit opposed the flesh we can therefore count on His help to overcome it. You cant tame the flesh, modify it’s behavior or compromise with it. It must be put to death! “... *you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live.*” (Romans 8:12–13, NLT) Put to death is strong language. But this is what we do with the help of Holy Spirit. This is not coping with sin language!

2. We are called not to just renounce sin but to put it to death! We are not to permit sin free liberty in our mortal bodies we are crucify it. Holy Spirit, help!
3. *“So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.”* (Colossians 3:5, NLT) What is the point? Do not tolerate sin in your life!
 - a) Confession and contrition do not replace putting to death the flesh. But must all work together. Ie. Markus Luttrell “We are never out to the fight!”
 - b) The context of Col 3:5 is that you have died and your life is hidden in Christ. Our life now flows from a heavenly realm. Therefore they are no longer natural to us.
- C. We are called to put off the ‘old man’ or ‘old nature’.
 1. *“But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.”* (Colossians 3:8, NLT) This is not a gentle work!
 2. *“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”* (Romans 13:12, NKJV)
 3. The corpse of the dead sin is not to be allowed to remain. Ie. Bury the Zombie!
 4. This putting off, crucifying, putting to death the sinful man is a lifetime work. The closer we get to the light the more of our own darkness is exposed. We see what early on in salvation could not be seen. So, we put to death sin and live for righteousness.

III. Living For Righteousness

- A. To live for righteousness signifies a concern or desire to steadfastly pursue righteous and holy living. This simply means that as a believer we live daily with the desire to be righteous. Mt 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Mt 6:33 Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. A Christian who grows in holiness is one who hungers and thirst for righteousness and gives priority to it in their life.
 1. *“And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness...you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”* (Romans 6:18–19, NKJV)
- B. How do we live for righteousness?
 1. Give ourselves to the Word of God
 - a) Obey the word. We give ourselves to the word of God so we know God heart of the matter. *“I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”* (Psalm 119:11, NLT)
 - b) The Word is our primary authority on righteous living. *“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”* (2 Timothy 3:16–17, NLT) If we are going to grow in holiness we must give ourselves to the Word.
 - c) Reading must be accompanied by action. It is not the knowledge but the knowledge implemented that makes the change. “How must I live this?” *““Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.”* (Matthew 7:24, NLT)
 2. Keep your eyes on Jesus.
 - a) *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith...”* (Hebrews 12:1–2, NLT)
Follow Jesus is the point!

- b) Note Jesus last words to Peter: “*Jesus replied, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me.”*” (John 21:22, NLT) Follow me.
 - c) Going back to Luke 9:23, take up your cross and follow. When we follow Jesus faithfully, sin become that must more detestable and easier to set aside.
 - d) Beholding Jesus causes transformation to take place in us. “*So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.*” (2 Co. 3:18, NLT) If you are looking to Christ you are seeking His highest.
 - e) For sanctification to continue it is imperative to have your mind set on things above.
3. We must ‘put on’ Christ.
- a) “*Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.*”(Colossians 3:12, NLT)
The words prior speak of taking off old man. The negative should be followed by the positive.
 - b) If we are looking to Christ and putting on Christ, this can be called abiding in Him.
4. Walk in the Spirit. To live for righteousness is to walk by the Spirit. If we have been made alive by the Spirit then we must walk by that same Spirit.
- a) 2 Cor 3:17 Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. Walk in freedom. 3:6.
 - b) The fruit of the Spirit is: *love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness and self control: against such there is no law.*” If this is the fruit of the Spirit and we are walking in we are being led by the Spirit. “*But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.*” (Galatians 5:18, NLT)
 - c) The life we now live we live in the Spirit. “*For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.*” (Galatians 5:6, NLT) Faith in Christ that is expressed by love is the camp of the victorious!
 - d) The ultimate of walking in the Spirit is walking in love! Love is what unites both law and freedom/spirit.

Conclusion:

- The Good New is that one of us, a man stands in the midst of the Trinity.
- Growing in sanctification is a work begun by God and continued in us by the help of the Holy Spirit and our cooperation with Him.
- What is your war today? What would change today if you purposed to put it to death and to put on Christ?