

Colossians 3:5-7 Putting Sin to Death -2

1

Introduction

In 3:5–9, Paul gives two sample lists of sins to kill. The lists include some of the most common and troubling sins believers face. They should not, however, be considered exhaustive. The first list, in 3:5, comprises sins of perverted love; the second, in 3:8–9, contains those of wicked hate. The first list begins with acts and progresses to motives, whereas the second begins with motives and progresses to acts. The first list involves personal sins, the second social ones. The first list relates to feelings, the second to speech. In between the lists (3:6–7), Paul gives two reasons for putting sin to death.

2

Colossians 3:5-9

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. ⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.

3

Sins of Perverted Love

Colossians 3:5

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Last week we saw that we are to put to death the sins that reign in our fleshly members. Though Paul is directing his attention to sexual sins, the progression that he is teaching applies to all sin. In this list, he starts with the outward sin and works his way back to in inward cause. If we are to overcome sin in our lives, we have to find the root cause and weed it out.

4

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Fornication refers can refer to any type of sexual sin.

Uncleanness means “filthiness, uncleanness and impurity.” It is a more general term than fornication, going beyond the act to the evil thoughts and intentions of the mind. Evil behavior begins with evil thoughts.

Passion and **desire** are similar terms. **Passion** is the physical and **evil desire** the mental side of our internal drives.

5

Sins of Perverted Love

Colossians 3:5b

fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Paul mentions **covetousness** or greed last because it is the evil root from which all the previous sins spring. It is also mentioned last in the Ten Commandments (cf. Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21). Covetousness comes from two Greek words which combined mean “**to have more.**” Covetousness is the insatiable desire to have more, or to have what is forbidden. As such, it is the source of fights and quarrels (James 4:2), as well as lusts, passion, and sin.

6

Sins of Perverted Love

Colossians 3:5b

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Covetousness is idolatry because it places selfish desire above obedience to God. Covetousness is the root cause of all sin. The desire for more money can lead to theft. The desire for power can lead to tyranny. The desire for a person can lead to sexual sin. When people sin, they are doing what they desire, rather than what God desires. They worship themselves instead of God, and that is idolatry.

7

Sins of Perverted Love

Colossians 3:5b

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The **antidote** for covetousness is **contentment**. A contented person will not desire to violate another person sexually or covet anything another person owns. A person who can say with Paul, “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am” (Phil. 4:11), is not likely to struggle with covetousness. **Contentment comes from trusting God**. The basis of that trust is our knowledge of Him and His purposes for His people as revealed in Scripture.

8

Sins of Perverted Love

Colossians 3:5b

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Contentment is the opposite of covetousness. Whereas the covetous, greedy person worships himself, the contented person worships God. Attacking covetousness lays the axe to a root cause of sin. When contentment replaces covetousness, the latter cannot give rise in the process that culminates in an act of sin.

9

Reasons for Putting Sin to Death

Colossians 3:6

Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

Having given one list of sins, Paul pauses before going on to the second and gives two strong, motivating reasons for putting sin to death.

1. Sin brings God's judgment

Because of these things refers back to the concept that sin springs out of covetous which is idolatry. One is trusting in self, others, and the fallen world rather than trusting in God!

10

Reasons for Putting Sin to Death

Colossians 3:6

Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

1. Sin brings God's judgment

God's wrath is His eternal anger and hatred of all unrighteousness. All sin is evil and is an antithesis to God's Holiness. Sin is the cancer that is eating away at Creation and responsible for death, disease, and corruption. Only God knows the full impact of sin and he hates what it is and what it does. **Therefore, we can say that Wrath is God's constant reaction to sin!**

11

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1. Sin brings God's judgment

The sons of disobedience (unbelievers) will experience the full force of God's eternal wrath. Paul writes in Romans 1:18, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." Because the unbeliever does not have faith in Christ, "the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36; cf. Rom. 2:8).

12

Reasons for Putting Sin to Death

Colossians 3:6

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1. Sin brings God's judgment

Believers should put sin to death and have no part in them. Sin brings wrath, not blessing. It never brings true happiness.

Believers have been delivered "from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10) and will experience no wrath (1 Thess. 5:9). Paul is not warning us that if we sin, we will feel the furious wrath of God. Rather he is saying that those who are Christ's, who have been made one with Him, would certainly not want to act like the children of wrath.

13

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1. Sin brings God's judgment

Although believers have been delivered from God's wrath (cf. Rom. 5:9), they are subject to **His chastening**. Hebrews 12:5–6 reminds us not to forget "the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons, 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.' " **God will react against sin.** The unbeliever will experience His eternal wrath, and the believer His loving chastening. Either way, all who pursue sin will suffer the consequences.

14

Reasons for Putting Sin to Death

Colossians 3:7

In which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

2. Sin is a part of the believer's past

Paul gives a second reason for putting sin to death, saying in effect, "You know to some degree how it was to live in sin. You hated it and that is why you came to Christ so you could be delivered from your manner of life."

In our past we committed sin out of ignorance and our blindness to the things of God. We were part of Satan's kingdom, but now have become citizens God. It was our sin that nailed Jesus to the cross. Now that we know about sin and its cost, we should do everything we can to avoid it.

15

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In which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

2. Sin is a part of the believer's past

Ephesians 2:1–5

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

16

So What ...

You have been made into a new creature. Why would you want to go back and live like the old. To overcome sin, you must dig deep into the core. Here lies the problem, the core is your sin nature, and it fights to be worshipped. You must learn to die to self and allow Christ's life to live in you and transform you into the person you were designed to be.

It is a difficult battle, but Jesus has given you His Truth in Scripture and His Presence in the Spirit. You have all you need to move forward one step at a time.

Let's do this together!