

# (Sermon Clip) Sanctification is Not Passive

by Tim Conway

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*This sermon emphasizes the active and aggressive nature of putting off the old man, highlighting the importance of personal responsibility in sanctification. It challenges the misconception of passivity in sanctification and the misuse of prayer as a crutch, urging believers to actively put away sinful behaviors without waiting for a feeling of power or relying solely on prayer. The message underscores the need for believers to confront sin directly, take action, and live as new creations in Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** Colossians 3:8, Ephesians 4:22, Romans 8:13, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 5:16, Romans 8:6, Galatians 6:7, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, James 1:22

**Topics:** "Active Sanctification", "Personal Responsibility in Faith"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the active and aggressive nature of putting off the old man, highlighting the importance of personal responsibility in sanctification. It challenges the misconception of passivity in sanctification and the misuse of prayer as a crutch, urging believers to actively put away sinful behaviors without waiting for a feeling of power or relying solely on prayer. The message underscores the need for believers to confront sin directly, take action, and live as new creations in Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit.

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## Transcript

The put-off is not passive, but you know what, we can act like it is. And this can be one of the greatest killers to sanctification that we can encounter when we deal with sanctification as though it is passive. I want us to be clear about something.

Putting off the old man is something that Paul is telling the Colossians and the Ephesians that they do. Oh, I know it's past tense with the Colossians, but it's something they did. Putting off these old mannish ways are something they must do.

It is something He is appealing to them. It's not something done to us. It's not something done for us.

It is specifically you are to put away. You are to put off. That's the language of Scripture.

Put off the old man. Put away falsehood. Put away bitterness.

Put away wrath. Put away anger. And you know what Paul never says here? What you really need to do is pray about it.

What you really need to do is fast about it or seek counsel over it. Now look, you need to hear me right. Say, oh, he's telling us not to pray about this, not to fast about this.

I always knew he had error. There it is. I knew something was wrong.

Listen, you know as well as I do that Scripture talks about praying without ceasing. But you need to listen to me and you need to hear not what I'm saying so much as hear what Paul is saying. Far too often through the years as I have been a pastor in this church, people use prayer as a crutch in a bad way and in a wrong way.

I can tell you, I have seen people make horrible decisions in their life. But they say, I prayed about it as though that just certifies that what they're doing has God's approval. I prayed about it.

And so, you can't touch me now. No counsel that is against this is going to stand because I prayed about this. That's one way I've seen prayer used wrongly.

But there's another way. You've got some sin in your life. There's something wrong.

And you say, well, I know that I have this thing in my life that's wrong and it's dishonoring to God and I'm asking God to take it away. And you see, that sounds very Christian, noble, and I'll tell you so often it is nothing but false piety. I'm praying about this sin in my life.

And you know what Paul would say? You go ahead and pray about that. But if you're ever going to live a sanctified life, you better come to the place where you put that off yourself and stop sitting there. You know what happens? Somebody prays about it.

Well, I prayed about it. And now they sit there. I prayed about that bitterness.

I prayed about that lack of forgiveness. I prayed about my laziness. I prayed about this, that, and the other thing.

And then you sit there. And I know what you're waiting for. You're waiting for this feeling of power.

You know, you wake up and it's like now you're the spiritual Superman and you feel it coursing through your veins. And it's like, you know, power is just exuding. You're going to see some light emanating from your face when you look in the mirror.

But that's how we are. Oh, I'm going to feel this. Paul says you might want to examine v. 17-32.

You'll notice I'm not really charging the people that they need to pray more. Where do you see prayer at all there? Paul doesn't tell you to pray about dishonesty or bitterness or laziness. Does he? He doesn't.

You know what? He goes straight to the point. And he says, you, Christian, need to get that out of your life. Period.

Get on with it, man. That's what Paul is saying. Paul doesn't say to the Ephesians, well, oh, you know, you have certain people in your church with old-manish tendencies.

Some of you aren't speaking truth to one another. Some of you are giving to sinful anger. Some are letting the sun go down on their anger.

Some are giving advantage to the devil. Some of you are not laboring very diligently and giving. Some of you are grieving the Holy Spirit.

Some are bitter and slanderous. He doesn't tell them to go start a special Thursday evening prayer meeting. You know what he tells them? You put that off.

Stop it. Say, oh, you know, that doesn't sound very spiritual. Having a Thursday night prayer meeting sounds spiritual.

Yeah. But you know what? You come back a year later, and who are the people that are running well? Who are the people that are the godly examples? They're the ones that stood up and looked their sin face to face and said, you're coming off. And you go to battle against it.

Versus the guy that has the prayer meeting every Thursday night. And a year later, he's just as pathetic and wrapped up in his sin as ever. Why? Because God doesn't say, you know, it's like, here's God.

God's saying to you, take it off. And you say, help me take it off. And he says, Paul's under inspiration here, take it off.

Oh, would you please help me to take it off? Can you imagine if your child was doing that? What would you do? Most parents would eventually become frustrated with that, and they'd take the child in as rebelling and spank them. If you as a parent said to your child, take that shirt off right now. Would you help me to take it off? You have arms, you can take that off.

You're equipped to take that off. Oh, but I need power to take this off. I need help to take this off.

Take it off. But you see, we feel so pious and so holy, and so, you know, oh, I'm a man of prayer. I pray about that sin all the time.

Yeah, how long have you been praying for it? The last 20 years. Well, why do you still have it? Because you never took it off. You see, that's the way Paul's talking.

We need to come face to face with this. There's something, it's definitely active on your part, almost aggressive. There's a violence about this, and there ought to be.

There's a lot of procrastination. There's a lot of false piety. We get people who struggle with the same thing over and over and over.

They pray, they ask others to pray. But Paul comes along and simply tells them, stop. Are you a thief? Stop and work with your hands and give.

Are you grieving the Spirit? Stop it. Are you bitter? Are you unforgiving? Put it off. Quit doing that.

Stop acting like a baby. Because the truth is, you're not a baby. You know what the truth is? You're God's man.

You're God's woman. And He's telling us to act like it. And I know you're going to declare to me, oh, I'm so weak.

I'm so frail. I'm too pathetic, too inexperienced, too newly saved, too dark a season. My righteousnesses are filthy rags.

My heart's deceitful. No one's good. What's the answer to this? Ah, you're a new creation in Christ.

Old things are passed away. If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. If you live according to the flesh, you're going to die.

Let me ask you this. Are you a Christian? You say yes. Does Scripture teach that if you're a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit? You say yes.

Case closed. You have the Holy Spirit. By the Holy Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body.

This excerpt was taken from the full sermon, What is the Old Man?

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