

What is the 'Old Man'■

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the importance of actively putting off the old man, the sinful nature, and embracing the new man created in righteousness and holiness. It challenges believers to confront their sins, not passively pray about them, but to take aggressive action in sanctification by facing, fighting, and putting off sinful behaviors. The message highlights the power and authority Christians have through the Holy Spirit to overcome sin and live in victory as new creations in Christ.

Scripture: Romans 6:6, Romans 6:14, Colossians 3:9, Ephesians 4:22, Joshua 3:15, Hebrews 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:3

Topics: "Sanctification", "New Creation in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

Ephesians 4, verse 17, Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds. They're darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart. They become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

But, that is not the way you learned Christ. Assuming that you have heard Him and were taught in Him as the truth is in Jesus. To put off your old self, or your old man, the word is Anthropos.

It's man. I know a number of the newer translations like to stick self in there. I think their intent is to try to help us, but I don't think it's necessary and I don't necessarily think that it helps us.

It's old man. That's how we were taught in Christ as the truth is in Jesus. To put off your old man, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new man created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness, therefore having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we're members one of another." And on he goes to the end of the chapter.

Now, Paul develops a very logical flow. You see it. In verses 17, 18, and 19, Paul, first of all, he reminds us of the kind of life we used to live.

And then what happens? Verses 20 and 21, he tells us that to learn Christ is to learn not to live the way we used to live any longer. That's what we learn. Then he brings out the specific truths in Jesus that we do learn if we're going to succeed in doing that which he's calling us to do.

And in verses 22, 23, and 24, he gives us in broad terms what this looks like. This truth in Jesus that we learn that convinces us not to walk in our former manner, Gentile life. And then when you break into verse 25 through 32, he gets specific.

He keys in on some specific things that are reminiscent of putting off the old man and being renewed in the spirit of your minds. I want to focus primarily on verses 22 through 24 and primarily 22 today. But let's just pick this up in verse 20 again.

But that is not the way you learned Christ. Assuming that you have heard Him. There's no about there in the original.

Heard Him and were taught in Him as the truth is in Jesus. Here's that truth, 22, to put off your old man which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires. So, questions.

I have questions. Here's some. See if you can answer these.

Is Paul teaching? These are the things we need to come to grips with. Because I'll tell you, this, what we're looking at right now, has to do with Christian sanctification. This old man, this has everything to do with sanctification.

We need to understand Paul's teaching and write. If we're really going to go after the quest for holiness, for purification. These are the questions that pop up in my mind.

Is Paul teaching that as Christians, the old man is still with us and needs to be put off? Or has the old man been already put off? Or am I partly, as a Christian, am I partly old man and partly new man? Or sometimes am I old man and sometimes am I new man? I guess the question is this, what relationship does the Christian have to the old man? Or maybe even a more basic question, what is the old man? Those are good questions, I think. Now, the thing is, if you look at the commentators, if you look at the theologians, if you look at the scholars, if you look at pastors and preachers, you're going to find that there is disagreement. They are all over the place with this.

So, we don't have to get too worried when that's the case. Why? Because we have God's Word. And we can look at it and we can seek.

Here's the thing, even when you've got a bunch of guys and scholarly guys and guys with high IQs that differ on something, the truth is, well, yeah, that may lead us to believe that there are some things that are difficult to figure out about this. But you know, most of the time, although some things are difficult to figure out, there are also some things that are not difficult to figure out. And a lot of times, if we just take the things that we actually can figure out and run with those, we'll be miles ahead.

So, there's three references in our New Testaments to the old man. This is where we get our direct information. There are some indirect places we might go to that don't specifically mention the old man, but

they might come into play because they have to do with the flesh.

Of course, that's one of the questions that comes up. How does the old man relate to the flesh? Well, if there's any relationship at all, then some of the things that have to do with the flesh may have to do with the old man too. So indirectly, there may be some verses that we could look at.

But here's the thing, there's three places where we directly have a reference to the old man in our New Testaments. And so we want to look at those. And of course, the first one is right here.

Ephesians 4, verse 22. The way that we have learned Christ, what we have been taught in Him is this, to put off. It's an infinitive.

To put off. You see it there. To put off your old man, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.

Now first, what can we glean from this? First off is this, the old man. Now Christian, this has to do with you. Because it's you who are the old man.

Yeah, when they say the old self, well, that's why they say that. Because they don't want you to think about some old man like some old man sitting over there in the corner that has nothing to do with you. This has everything to do with you because the old man is you.

But, is it you now? Well, look at what he says. He says, which belongs to your former manner of life. This is the old you.

It's the person you were formerly before being born of God and becoming a new creation. Isn't that what Scripture says? We are new creations in Christ. The old, and you know, you could put man in there.

Paul's just kind of abbreviating that right there. The old is passed away. All things have become new.

In other words, that's who you were. But that's not who you are now. That's formerly who you were and that's why you should no longer walk as a Gentile because you're no longer a Gentile.

You're no longer the former Gentile you. So you shouldn't walk that way. Belongs to your old manner of life.

This is the man I once was, but which I am no longer. The old man is corrupt. Now this is an interesting word.

It's a verb participle. When you think participles, oftentimes you can think putting an "-ing" on the end of it. Well, when you say corrupting, you've got this idea of something in process, in progress, and you know what? You'd be absolutely right in thinking that.

The New King James actually translates this, the old man which grows corrupt. The old man is in a process of growing further and further, decaying, putrefying. And another shade in the meaning of this word corrupt is it can be translated corrupt or destruction.

It's the idea of you are disintegrating in your corruption. You're moving towards destruction. More and more polluted, advancing rapidly in the direction of destruction.

This is moral corruption. The result of what? The deceitful desires or lusts of deceit. You know what corrupts us? You know what rots us? Corrupts is the old man, is that man who is given to deceitful desires.

Deceitful. Those desires lie to him, but you know what Scripture says? He loves to believe a lie. Men love to have sin lie to them.

And what's the great lie? I mean, Scripture speaks about the deceitfulness of sin. Anybody know where? Hebrews 3. And then the Scripture also says that our heart is deceitful. Anybody know where? 17.

Yeah, I mean, sin is deceitful. Our hearts are deceitful. We're just contradictions.

And the thing is, sin comes to us. Sin lies to us. Sin presents itself to us as a friend.

Sin presents itself to us in a way that flatters us. It promises everything. That's what sin does.

It promises us, you need me to make you happy. But it's a liar. And you see, the thing is we go after it and all it does is corrupt us.

And it's corrupting and it's leading in this direction. The old man that we used to be, you know what it was like? You were getting worse and worse. You were not getting better and better.

And that's what Scripture says. Evil men grow worse and worse. That's what we were doing.

That's what the old man is. This old man is never stationary. The world around us is moving.

You look at people. You look at people in the midst of which we live. They're all in motion.

You know the motion of the Christian? More and more. It's like brighter and brighter until the full shining of the fullness of noonday. We're moving in that direction.

Our life is like the sun rising higher and higher to noonday. Whereas the world around us, they're disintegrating. It's a spiral.

Nobody is static. But it's what we once were. So this old, deceived, lusting, corrupting man belongs to my former manner of life.

But here's the thing. Is Paul indicating that that old man is never present in my Christian life? Can he come back? Or has he been here in part the whole time? Or is he gone? You know what's interesting to me is I was reading something about this old man from Martin Lloyd-Jones. And Lloyd-Jones preached through Ephesians and he preached through Romans.

And you know what's very interesting? He preached through Ephesians first. And so when he preached through Ephesians, he basically described it like this. He described it like you're the stage driver.

And you've got two horses leading the stage. One is the old man, one is the new man. And then you're kind of separate.

That's how he identified it. But you know what's very interesting? When he got later, like maybe 10 years later, he preached through Romans, he didn't talk that way anymore. You know why? Because he saw truth in Romans that convinced him that old man horse isn't there anymore.

And I want to show you the text that convinced him of that. Go to Romans 6. Romans 6 and verse 6. We know. I hope we do know.

We do need to know this. Massively important. You see, what Paul is doing is he's building a theological argument that we need to take.

We need to take the truth of it. And it needs to register in our brains because if it does, it will really help you fight this battle. He says we know.

He's assuming we do. Maybe a lot of us don't. We know that our old man was crucified.

Let me just interject right here. The King James Bible is the only translation that puts it in the present tense. That actually is not the best rendering.

This is an aorist tense indicative verb. It does imply a past event that has once and for all taken place. Now, if you're in doubt at all, if you've got your King James Version and you're in doubt at all, I'm going to prove to you from the context, it's a once and for all, a done deal.

The context itself proves it. But I want you to see this. See, some would say, ah, there it is.

Crucified. You see, Jesus was on the cross for six hours. Crucifixion is a very slow process.

The old man, this is how the reasoning goes, the old man was put on the cross the day I was born again. And he will remain there, somewhat losing strength, losing energy, slowly dying until I go to glory. Now, some reason like that.

But I would say, if you reason like that, it may be because you have a King James Bible and you're taking the is to mean that the old man is currently crucified right now. But, like I say, just a little bit of research will show you that the aorist tense indicative verb is always meant to refer to something that is a past event that is once and for all taken place. Now, here's the thing.

Let's look at this verse again. Verse 6, we know that our old man was crucified with who? Him. Who's Him? Christ.

And you see, the issue is that he's been arguing for ever since the beginning of this is the Christian cannot continue in sin. Why can't the Christian continue in sin? Not because the Christian is crucified and now whatever he was is slowly being put to death. The reality is that just as Jesus Christ died, so have we died.

When it's talking about crucifixion, we've been crucified with Him. But the reality is He died and we died with Him. If you don't get to the death part, then you're not really seeing the unity, the union that we have with Christ that Paul wants us to see.

The reality is we didn't just get crucified with Him, we died with Him, we got buried with Him, and we rose with Him. That's the reality here, brethren. And if you have any doubts whatsoever, just read verse 6 with me.

We know that our old man was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin for one who has died. You see the issue? He's not implying that this is a crucifixion process that is ongoing. He's assuming we got crucified with Christ and we died.

That's the issue. So, now here's something interesting. The old man was crucified.

Let me tell you something, this isn't just an aorist tense indicative verb. This is also a passive verb. You know the difference between an active verb and a passive verb? What's the difference? The difference is this, who does the crucifying? When it's passive, it means it's been done to us.

It means we didn't crucify ourselves. You know what it's saying? God killed your old man. God came in and did it.

God put the knife to his throat or the spikes in his hands and feet and the spear in his side. God did that. God put him up there.

God killed him. And we walk now. Look at verse 4. Look at the end of verse 4. How do we walk now? In newness of life.

And you know what? Lloyd-Jones saw this and he said whatever Ephesians might teach, this is clear. That he, that old man, has been crucified to death. The result of that old man being crucified is what? That it might bring the body of sin to nothing.

And that we might no longer be enslaved to sin. You see, the question on the table is this. What does 6.1 say? Can Christians continue in sin? And the answer is no.

They cannot continue in sin. Well, you might picture it like this. Picture the old man.

I picture the old man. He doesn't stand upright because he's corrupt. I see him down there like an animal on all fours.

And sin is the slave master. And he leads him around on a leash. And you know what the leash is? Deceitful desires.

That's what it said over in Ephesians. And you know where you see that? You see that right here in 6.12. You look at 6.12, you get the picture of it. Now, I recognize in verse 12 he's telling us what we ought not to let happen, but what he's describing is what in fact did happen when we were nothing but the old man.

Sin did reign in our mortal bodies and it got us to obey the desires or the passions of the body. Not of sin, of the body. That's it.

The body of sin. And we were led around on that leash. That leash of lust and desire.

Oh, it may not have taken all of us into the gutter. It may have taken you into higher education. It may have taken you into religion.

It may have taken you a lot of places. But your pride, your desire, the thing that made you feel good, the thing that made you feel important, the thing that gave you worth in life, and all the time it was just sin leading you around on that leash. The body of sin.

But you know what the picture is here? The picture is that sin seeks to reign in our mortal bodies to make us obey our body's passions. But what happens? The old man is crucified. And your body of sin is now governed by a new you.

And here's the thing. You have the same bodies. And you know what? The appetites are still there.

But it's a new you. Old things have passed away. That old man is dead.

That body is now being governed by a new you so that you know what needs to happen? Verse 13 needs to happen. You surrender your members as instruments of righteousness. And in verse 14, sin no longer has dominion.

I mean, you're now in that realm. That's the reality. Okay, one other place in Scripture where this idea of old man comes up, let's look at it.

It's found in Colossians 3. Somewhat a parallel account or parallel teaching to what we have in Ephesians. But it is different. There are some subtle differences here.

Colossians 3.9 Do not lie to one another. Notice this. Seeing that you have put off the old man with its practices.

Now that's a very interesting way to reason. Don't lie. In other words, put off lying because you have put off the old man with its practices.

You've put off the old man practices, the old man-ish ways, and yet what is one of the old man-ish ways? Dishonesty. And yet, he's appealing to them. Well, it's like Paul.

Well, which is it? Have they put it off or have they not put it off and need to put it off? And Paul would say, yes. So, now here's what's interesting about this verse. This isn't passive for one.

You see, the crucifixion, the crucifying of the old man, that's passive. That's done to us. And that's crucifixion.

This is different terminology. This is a different picture. That's crucifixion.

This is putting off. That is done to us by God. This we do.

You can see the verb. Put off. Seeing that you have... you did this.

You put off the old man. This is something we do. Now, I would have you think about this because I think it's a good way to see it.

God crucifies the old man. That's regeneration. And you walk in newness of life.

We put off the old man. That's not passive. That's active.

We do that. And that's sanctification. I think if you see the difference between that, that can be helpful.

Now, this is past tense in Colossians. Something that Paul assumes the Colossians already did. And yet, he says in v. 8, "...but now..." Now! Okay, you did that, he's going to say in the next verse, but now, you need to continue to do something.

You need to do something now. Now. Now.

So what? Is this incomplete or is this not complete? Now, they still have work to do. "...Now you must put them all away." Anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth. Well, these are the practices of the old man.

Do not lie. Do not lie. But wait, they already put off the old man with his practices, yet lying is precisely one of the old man's practices.

It's almost like you feel this tension. I think this is a lot of the reason why you get scholars and they're all over the place because they feel this tension and some run with one side of the tension and one run with the other and some try to keep balanced. Let's go back to Ephesians 4.22. Ephesians 4.20, "...But that is not the way you learned Christ." Now, that's past.

That's past tense. That's not the way you formerly learned Christ, assuming that you heard Him. That's past tense.

"...And were taught in Him." That's past tense. As the truth is in Jesus. But all that past tense Jesus taught you kind of language is this, infinitive, to put off your old man, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.

In Romans 6, Paul's clear. Our old man has been crucified and is dead. Colossians 3.9, Paul asserts that Colossians had already put off the old man.

Here in Ephesians, Paul affirms that any genuine Christian who has been taught of Christ, that Christ is going to teach them to put off the old man. So is it complete or not? Did it happen already? Is it something I keep doing? There is this tension. In fact, go back to Colossians.

Keep your finger right there in Ephesians 4, but go back those few pages to Colossians 3. I want you to see something. Ephesians 4.25 and Colossians 3.8. I want to compare these. In Ephesians 4.25, "...therefore having put away falsehood." Do you all see that? Okay, this is this tension that we feel.

Paul's speaking. If Paul's speaking to us in this fashion, we've already put it away. I mean, that's the assumption.

You put it away. "...Therefore having put away falsehood." But now when you look at Colossians 3.8, now you must put them all away. What? Anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth.

Do not lie to one another. Do not lie to one another. Wait, Paul, you told me that I've already put away falsehood.

What are you going to take? Are you going to say, well, you know, the Ephesians put it away. The Colossians hadn't. No, I would say we need to take both these verses and be able to compare them together and have them speak to us.

I don't think he's saying, well, that church, they finished with lying. This church over here, they still had a problem with lying. No, I think what you feel is this tension, this reality that you've put away.

You've formerly put away, but now you need to continue to put off. Why would you even talk like that? Well, brethren, I know this. You may remember the days when the Emancipation Proclamation was given by Abraham Lincoln, President of these United States, freeing all the slaves.

But do you know that the slaves often had to be reminded again and again and again? In fact, a lot of the slave masters had to be reminded again and again and again of the way things truly were. And a lot of the slaves had this disposition to go back under the old thinking that they were still slaves, that they were not really free, that they really couldn't do the things that they freely desired to do. They had to be reminded.

Or I remember this. Years ago, when I started going into Romania, I remember Sorin saying, the church here in Romania still acts like they're under communism. You know, during the years when the Romanian church was under communism, they were simply trying to survive.

Now they're free. Now they ought to be looking out. They ought to be going to the Orthodox people and evangelizing them.

They ought to be looking beyond their own country and thinking about evangelizing the rest of Eastern Europe. But you know what? They were still in survival mode. And one of the things that Sorin said was getting the people to think that they're no longer under communism is really difficult.

Why? Because you get these mindsets. You get this instilled in them. This is the same kind of thing here.

Paul is coming along. You know, we'll say things like this. Quit acting like a baby.

That's what he's doing here. Quit it. Quit acting like a baby.

Who do you say that to? You know what? I never said that to my children when they were one year old. Why? Because they were babies. Babies act like babies.

I say that to my 16-year-old son or to his 16-year-old daughter. Quit acting like a baby. Why? Because they're not babies.

That's the kind of thing that we have going on here. You ought not to act like a baby because you're not one. Don't behave like that.

Stop with the old man. This is what Paul's saying. He's saying you've put it off, but then he says stop it.

Lay off those old mannish aspects. Why? Because that's not who you are. Be what you are.

Realize what you are and be that. It's precisely because the old man is dead that you can put him off. He no longer is in command.

He no longer defines you. That's the issue. So, are you ready for the practical part of this? The put off? It's 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.

As though, 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.

Ah! 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. Like you're going to see some light emanating from your face when you look in the mirror.

But that's how we are. We want, you know, oh, I'm going to feel this. Paul says you might want to examine verses 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, you have certain people in your church with old mannish tendencies.

Some of you aren't speaking truth to one another. Some of you are given 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. You say, oh, 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 pray. 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. If you're a Christian, you've been born again.

You say, but I'm weak. Well, yeah, I'll grant you without Christ, you can do nothing. But you have Christ.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Is He the one strengthening? Yes. But you can do all things through Him.

You're not without Christ. You're not without the Spirit. Don't you recognize God is your God? He's the Almighty.

He's with you. He says He'll never leave you or forsake you. He empowers you.

It is God who causes you to will and to do of His good pleasure. You have the power. Do you believe that? You see, when all you do is pray and you don't put it off, you don't believe that.

You're not believing God. You're not trusting God. Christian, you know what the reality is as a Christian? Your sins aren't burying you any longer.

They're not on top of you. They're not crushing you. You're on top.

You're in the place. Look, if God is telling you to put it off, you know what? Have you ever known God to command you to do something that He's not going to empower you to do? You can take every commandment of God as a promise that He is going to help you. That He is going to be with you.

Those sins, they're not burying you anymore. You're on top of them. The way to solve this problem is not perpetual prayer.

It is to think. Who are you? What is this sin? There's a place to look at this and recognize, I am not that old man. Yes, back when I was lost, I held grudges.

I was a thief. I was this. I was that.

I was immoral. I was drunk. I was self-righteously religious.

Fill in the blank. You can look at those things now and recognize that is not befitting of a Christian. That is not walking worthy of Christ.

That is not new man kind of conduct. And if it belongs to the old man, Paul says put it away. And he's not assuming you can't do it.

He's assuming that that's exactly the way to live this Christian life. That you want power. So you pray, you wait to feel it.

But does that happen? That's not the way it happens. Put it away. Put away lying.

Put away anger. Put away stealing. Put away dishonesty.

Face the facts. If you do not put these old man-ish ways away, face it. It's because you won't, not because you can't.

You need to be honest. Brethren, yes, we need to be a praying church. We need to believe in a great God Who is able to do great things.

And look, there are times when we get to places in the Christian life like concerning our children. We want God to save our children. My sister's probably going to take ladies back and pray.

You've preached the Gospel to your children. You've warned your children. You've loved your children.

You've thanked your children. And you come before the Lord and say, Lord, I have done everything I possibly can, but I can't save them. And you know what? You know what the error is? You take that same logic and same way of thinking to your sanctification.

And if you do that, you're wrong. You're not thinking right. You never want to get to the place where when it has to do with some sin in your life, and I'm afraid too often that's what we do, and that's why we end up groveling with that same sin on and on and on.

Look, when God gives you a command, if God told you somewhere in the Bible that you could save your children and there was a certain formula, well, then you know what? There comes a time when yes, you pray, but then you do the formula. But He didn't do that. But you know what? When it comes to sanctification, He actually has told us what to do.

And He's told us put it away. That's what we need to do. We don't want to think of sanctification like we think of having our children converted.

And you need to think. You need to think. Think about who you are.

That's what Paul's appealing to in these people. Think. Think.

The old man, that belonged to your former manner of life. You're the new man. You're new.

It's useless to say you don't have strength. We have! If you're a Christian, the power of God is there. We're no longer what we were.

And the first thing you need to do is preach that reality to yourself. You're never going to win in this battle if you're not preaching these truths to yourself. Look, Scripture says, by the Spirit I can put to death the deeds of the body.

In fact, everybody who is going to have life does that. Sin no longer has dominion over me. You know what? Before it ever says, don't let sin reign in your mortal bodies, it says you need to reckon yourself, you need to consider yourselves dead to sin.

But, old man. Old man was crucified. Why? To bring the body of sin to naught.

To nothing. Sin no longer have dominion. Sin no longer rules you.

Sin doesn't empower you. Sin doesn't master you. You're in that position.

You're in the position God has given you. You know what, brethren? It's much like in the Scriptures where you find that Jesus said to His disciples, you go, two by two, and you're going to tread on the scorpions and the snakes. You go cast those demons out.

And they came back and it's like, oh, Lord, the spirits. And He said, don't rejoice in that. Rejoice that your names are... But do you know, in the same way that He gave them power and authority over the demons, He has given you, Christian, power and authority over sin in your mortal body.

You have the authority. You have the power. Oh, I know.

I know. Some of those sins, some of those idols, they send roots down deep. And it hurts to tear them up.

You tear them up, it feels like part of you is coming out. But you know what? You've got the grip and you've got the strength to tear those things out. It's kind of like a person going around wearing a raincoat.

And they're praying about it. They're complaining about how hot it is. They take it off.

And that's the picture here. This is like a picture of taking off clothing. Like you've got some clothing on you, it's not befitting of a Christian.

And you need to take it off. You're no longer some beggar, some slave, that's just groveling at the feet of sin, licking, lusting, like some animal. The whole art of the Christian living is to know how to preach to yourself, to talk to yourself.

You've got to convince yourself from Scripture. You've got to talk to yourself. It's kind of like David.

Why, O my soul? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? He's talking to himself. He's asking himself questions. That's the thing.

You've got to preach to yourself. You know, when Jesus said this to those Jews that believed in Him, He said, if My Word abides in you, then you can know you're real. Well, how does His Word abide in us? We preach it to ourselves.

We live on the reality of it. We live like it's true. We preach it to ourselves and convince ourselves that is a reality.

Sin will not have dominion. Do you recognize? You can look at any sin in your life. This has to do with every single sin and idol in your life.

Don't tell me you're in a special category or your sin is in a special category. It's not. They're all in this category.

Every one of them. God tells you, put it off. God tells you, cleanse it.

God tells you, flee from it. Every one of them. There's no exceptions.

He tells you, deal with it. Do what you need to do to get away from it. Flee from it.

Cleanse it away. He tells you to put it to death. He tells you to pummel your body.

Give it a black eye. 1 Corinthians 9, where we were. That's what He tells us to do.

Put it to death. By the Spirit, you put it to death. Every one of them.

You need to remind yourself of who you are, what you are. You need to remind yourself of this. Didn't Peter teach us that Christ died? He bore our sins in His body on that tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

Didn't He die on that cross to accomplish that very thing? In Ephesians, we often pray this. Now, to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think. Think of this God.

He's able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond what we ask or think. Have you ever kept going according to the power at work within us? Oh, we like to think of how great God is! But then Paul says, the greatness can be summed up by this reality. The power at work within you.

Like, wow, He's able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond what I ask or think. And all of that great expectation can be summed up in Him looking at you and saying, yeah, He's great according to the power at work within you. Oh, but you don't know me.

You don't know what I have to endure. You don't know how powerful the temptation is in my life. You don't know how weak I am.

You've grown. You're depressed. But I would just ask you this, are you clear on this doctrine? I mean, do you see it? Do you recognize what Paul is saying? Do you hear him? Do you recognize what's true of you? I just ask you this, are you a new man? You say yes.

Then I would say, live like it. Stop acting like an old man. Stop acting like a baby.

Because you're not. You're not that person anymore. Do you have faith? Then believe.

Believe this. Live like you believe it. Face your sins.

That's it. Do some spiritual inventory. Face them.

Don't cower away. Don't run away. That's what happens so often.

Oh, I'm praying to God. I've been praying for years that He'd deliver me from this thing. All you're really doing is cowering away from it.

You won't confront it. You basically leave it to God like it's His fault that you're still there. And all the time, He's indicating to you, you need to do something about this.

You need to face your sins. You need to face your old mannish way. And stop it.

Stop this. Have you ever really been confronted by your sins? Looking them in the face? I know. Some of you, you feel mastered by them.

You fear them. You're grieved by them. But you keep running away.

You're cowering. Your whole attitude is wrong. Examine this thing.

See it for what it is. It's contrary to who and what God is. It's contrary to who and what God has done in your life.

See it for what it is. Something that's got to be rid of. What is it? I don't know, but you know.

I know the things in my life. You know the things in your life. But you need to face them.

Instead of running away, say it to yourself. No, no, I'm not running away. You must go.

I'm reminded all over again of David's attitude. The Lord is my portion. He said, I promise to keep your words.

He says, I've sworn an oath and confirmed it to keep your righteous rules. He's committed. I am going to stare those sins in the face.

I'm covenanting that I'm going to do battle against them. And I'm going to keep God's ways. I'm God's man.

And He's changed me. He's empowered me. And sin will not have dominion.

And it doesn't matter how entrenched it is. It doesn't matter how long that idol has sat there. It will not have dominion.

And you put it off. You stop it. So we say we don't want to see hypocrites in the church.

But what does it make a person who claims to have been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son who simply prays and never acts? He says, alright, I'm a new man. It's just plain at being a Christian. Is it consistent with your claim of being a new man to go on living like the old man? You got that raincoat on? Take it off.

God gave you arms. And I'm talking in the spiritual realm. There's not one thing in our sanctification that is not to be approached in this way.

And it seems to me, some who profess to be Christians, it's almost like they deliberately put on the old man things that belong to the flesh and the devil and the world, things that are not compatible with the new life. What does Scripture say? You know what it says? It says don't make provision for the flesh. And you can wrestle and wrangle with whatever relationship you think flesh has to the old man, but I'll say this, don't make any provision for those old manish ways in your life.

That's what Paul said. Don't feed it. Don't encourage it.

I know. I know. I hear.

One of the big things that men struggle with and it keeps resurfacing in lots of the disciplinary action that's had to happen in this church, it ends up coming back to sexual immorality. Where does it start? Job made a covenant with his eyes. You start looking at things, men, and it leads places.

It leads places here. You have to say no to your eyes. Who's in control? Submit your members to God.

That's what Paul says to the Romans. And he's again implying, you have the ability to do this, but you need to count yourselves dead to sin. You need to recognize this old man has been crucified to bring this body of sin to nothing.

There's a new man on the throne in your life. The new man. I mean, you can look.

That's Christ. But you've come willingly into allegiance to Him. Brethren, one of the things that I've seen since I've been pastoring, people come into the church, they want mentoring.

They want accountability partners. But you know, oftentimes, those are people who recognize they're failing. And they're not really trusting the Lord.

Their confidence is in getting the right mentor or the right accountability partner. Because if you really trust the Lord, you don't need anybody else in the equation. I recognize we can encourage one another.

I recognize we can give instruction, just like I'm giving you right now from Paul's teaching, that will help put you in the right way. I recognize those things can be useful. But you know what? At the end of the day, this battle only needs to be between you and sin with God at your side.

That's all it needs to be. And you know what? The most godly people are the ones who fight the battle on that battlefield with those present, and they have the victory. The people that are always resting and leaning on meeting somebody else, they're flopping through the Christian life.

Because their confidence isn't in the right place. You can take great confidence. If God inspires the Apostle Paul and tells you to put it off, you can look at God and say, God, are you telling me to put it off? Then I'm going to.

And you know what faith is? Faith isn't waiting until you feel empowered. Faith is you take that step to put the dagger in the heart of that sin. And you know what you'll find? God will give you such power in that arm.

See, that's faith. It's when we step. You want to know what it looks like? It looks like those priests of old who were told to put their foot in the water of the Jordan, and then the waters would give way.

But you see, they had to walk by faith. They had to put their foot in first. Those floodwaters appeared overwhelming.

It was overwhelming the banks. I mean, of all times that Israel was going to cross the Jordan, it had to be at flood stage. But you can be sure God did it that way.

Why? To show you that when your sins come in like a flood and they're overwhelming, you put your foot in that water and they will give way. It's meant to be instructive, brethren. Pummel your body.

That's what Paul did. He buffeted his body. You have power.

You take that step, God will empower you. That's the way it works. That's the way He works.

It's faith. You walk by faith. You walk by faith in an unseen God and you go forth to do battle and you find He's with you, He helps you.

God, give us a holy violence, brethren, in dependence on Him. Amen. Father, I pray for purity in this church, for brothers and sisters that are doing battle with sin.

I pray for the reality of putting off the old man. Putting off that which belongs to our former manner of life and is so ugly. The old man is ugly.

He's rotting. He's corrupting. He's lusting.

Just ugly. Filthy and ugly. And I pray that filthiness and ugliness would just, Lord, through holy aggressiveness, be eradicated by us doing battle with our own sins.

I pray this in Christ's name, Amen.

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