

Kill Your Sin! —— Colossians 3:5-11

Introduction, Outlines

- **Scripture reading:** Colossians 3:1-11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Peter 4:2-3.
- **Introduction:** New year is a time when we say goodbye to the old and welcome the new. So is the time when anyone believes in Christ (1 Corinthians 5:17)! What’s the practical effect of this transformation in our life? One important point is in today’s passage —— Kill your sin!
- **Context:** The reason we must kill our sin is because we as Christians live with a heavenly perspective (vv 1-4), looking forward to the day when Jesus will come again and we will be fully sanctified. If this hope is true, you have to kill your sin (cf. 1 John 3:2-3)!
- **Outlines:**
 - Title: Kill Your Sin!
 - A. Three Commands to Kill Your Sin (v5a, 8a, 9a)
 - B. Two Lists of Sins to Be Killed (v5b, 8b)
 - C. Three Reasons Why You Should Kill It (vv 6-7, 9b-11)
 1. Because of God’s Wrath Against Sin (v6)
 2. Because of Your Experience of Sin (v7)
 3. Because of Your New Identity in Christ (v9b-11)

Three Commands to Kill Your Sin (v5a, 8a, 9a)

- **“Therefore” (v5):** This connects to the text before, indicating that only Christians (those whose life is hidden with Christ in God, fixing their hope completely on the revelation of Jesus Christ with a heavenly perspective) have the ability to follow this command.

If you have not put your faith in Christ as your Lord and Savior but are interested in the life pursuit expressed here, it is because God has put His basic moral law in you to make you realize intuitively that you are a sinner. What you need to do first is to trust Christ's salvation, the gospel truth, and let Christ become your eternal hope and the heavenly perspective that governs your life. Otherwise, this exhortation to kill your sin will be of no benefit to you, because you won't have the ability to live it out.

- **“consider the members of your earthly body as dead” (v5):** Literally “to *kill* the members of your earthly body!” This is the first command. It is personification, comparing sin to parts of your body. The implication is that before sin is killed, it is alive, and living on your body as body parts, like an eye or a hand!

Matthew 5:29-30 “If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. **30** If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Explanation: This is not for us to abuse or harm ourselves, for the physical body is not the problem. Sin comes from the heart (Mark 7:14-23). It is not the body that needs to be put to death, but to get rid

of all sins from the inside out. This analogy emphasizes that sin is deeply rooted, like a member of the body, so its removal requires the kind of determination as if to cut a piece of flesh off your body.

Metaphor: It can be compared to cancer. People who had cancer know how painful the treatment is, but no one would refuse to be treated because if you don't kill cancer, it will kill you. It is the same with sin. Therefore, strive to kill your sin, otherwise, your sin will kill you. If you don't kill your sin, you will be killed by your sin. Even if you need to take some strong medicine, you have to do it.

- **“Put them all aside”** (v8): This is the second command. The context emphasizes the contrast to the past, “when you were living in them”. “Put aside” literally means to take off a piece of clothes, as you would a filthy garment.

Metaphor: Imagine a beggar who lives among trash piles with other beggars. His clothes are dirty and stinky. One day, the prince comes to him and invites him to live in his royal palace. Guess what's the first thing he'll do when he gets there? Take off his filthy clothes! You used to live in sin, and now your life is in Christ, so take off all those filthy sins!

- **“Do not lie to one another”** (v9): This is the third command. It appears to be connected to the sins in verse 8, but in the original Greek, it is stated separately as a new sentence. Why is lying separated from the list? On one hand, lying is a serious sin (cf. Proverbs 6:16-19. In the list of seven things the Lord hates, two are lying); On the other, the verb literally means “falsehood, dishonest”, which may refer to all falsehood in word and deed, so in a broad sense, any sin a Christian commit knowing he shouldn't do it has the nature of a lie, because his words and deeds are contradictory. You say you're a Christian but your deeds do not agree with your Christian identity.

Two Lists of Sins to Be Killed (v5b, 8b)

- **“Immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry”** (v5) This list takes sexual sin as an example and makes a deep analysis of sin from the outside to the inside.

“Immorality”: It refers to all kinds of sexual behavior in violation to God's moral standard, that is, outside of the marital relationship between one man and one woman. The way to kill immorality is to flee from it (1 Thessalonians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Joseph's example in Genesis 39).

“Impurity”: It refers to impure thoughts, that is, lustful thoughts. Just protecting outwardly is not enough. Jesus says to sin in your heart equals to commit the actual deed (Matthew 5:28).

“Passion, evil desire”: These two words are synonyms, expressing the strong desire of the heart which gives a passionate drive for the goal. Desire goes deeper than thoughts. It drives one's thoughts (cf. James 1:15; David's example in 2 Samuel 11).

“Greed”: It is composed of “more” and “to have” in Greek. Greed is not being content with what you have and always wanting more. Contentment is very important (Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:8), otherwise greed will produce many desires: greed for money leads to stealing, greed for praise leads to hypocrisy, greed for power leads to trickery, and greed for pleasure leads to immorality.

“Greed, which amounts to idolatry”: Where your greed is, there your idol is! The root of all sins is idolatry. These idols themselves may be legitimate desires, for example, a good job, good marriage, but if the desire is so strong that you cannot live without it, it becomes greed, that is, idolatry, replacing the place in your heart which God alone should occupy.

- **“Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth”** (v8): These start from the heart, inside to outside.

“Anger”: It is a powerful emotion, as the feeling of hatred accumulates and moves in the heart, seeking opportunity to burst out. This word is often used to describe “God’s wrath” (as in v6). God’s wrath is holy and righteous, but man’s anger is usually sinful and selfish.

“Wrath”: It is the sudden eruption of anger, and shows itself in attitude, word and action. The eruption is usually brief, but can cause huge damage, like a volcano.

“Malice”: It means to do harm to people purposely out of evil intent, including all kinds of harmful words. Malicious word is from a malicious heart, “For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.” (Matthew 12:34).

“Slander”: It means to attack people with bad words, often untruthful or exaggerated words, in order to hurt the reputation of others. These are destructive words behind someone’s back, and the one being slandered usually is the last person to know what happened.

“Abusive speech from your mouth”: It is more direct insults or curses spoken in front of someone’s face. Jesus says whoever says such words to his brother is guilty of murder (Matthew 5:22), because he has already killed his brother in his heart.

Three Reasons Why You Should Kill It (vv 6-7, 9b-11)

1. *Because of God’s Wrath Against Sin (v6)*

- **“The wrath of God”**: We need to know this attribute of God! Many people don’t know God as a wrathful God. The God many people think they know only has love and no other emotions. However, because God is holy and righteous, the Bible says ——
Psalm 7:11 “God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day.”
Romans 2:5 “.....you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”
- **“The sons of disobedience”**: This refers to an unrepentant non-believer. God’s wrath won’t pour out on true believers, because Jesus will come “from heaven..... who **rescues us from the wrath to come.**” (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Jesus took God’s wrath for our sins on the cross and satisfied God’s righteous demand for us. So, since we have already been rescued from His wrath, why do we still do the things which provoke His wrath?

2 Corinthians 5:9 “Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.”

2. *Because of Your Experience of Sin (v7)*

- “**and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them**”: Remember your past experience of playing with fire, look at your scars, you have tasted the bitter fruit of sin. Why, after being rescued, do you want to jump back in the fire again? It is utterly foolish for a Christian to sin, just like a person who has been burned all over turning back to play with the fire again!

1 Peter 4:2-3 “so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.”

3. *Because of Your New Identity in Christ (v9b-11)*

- “**since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.....have put on the new self**”: The metaphor of changing clothes shows the new completely replacing the old —— not simply putting patches on the old self, for the old is so bad it can never be repaired; nor is it putting the new on top of the old to look good on the outside but still filthy inside —— it is to replace the old with the new, completely changed!

Note: “new self”, “old self” “refer to our *internal nature, not outward behavior*”

Romans 6:6 “..... knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with.....”

2 Corinthians 5:17 “if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature.....”

Galatians 2:20 “..... and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.....”

These verses clearly tell us, the moment someone truly believes in the Lord, the essence of his life undergoes a complete transformation! Please note: some truths are not to be felt clearly and immediately. We must use the Bible to interpret our experience, not the other way around, use our experience to interpret the Bible. Some may say conversion is a gradual change, but the Bible says the moment you believe, you are a new creature! Of course, the demonstration of this truth usually takes time, but that’s the “being renewed” part in v10. As to your nature, God instantaneously transforms you into a new creature through the gospel and the work of the Spirit at a specific time point only known to Him.

- “**Its evil practices**”: What we laid aside is not only the old nature, but also the deeds of the old self! That is, sins such as listed in the verses above! If I have not completely laid aside these sins, does it mean I am still the old self, not the new self yet? Of course not! Otherwise, Christians will not sin. These three commands will be non-sense. How to understand then?

Explanation: The nature of sinning before and after conversion is totally different, because you have a different inner life now. Before, your old self was totally in sin, and your pursuit was the pleasure of sin, so sinful deeds were the natural expression of your old life; but now, **you sin against the nature of your new self, you are dragging your new self to do what your new self doesn’t want to do!** So from this perspective, the evil practices of your old self have been laid aside. The new nature gives you

a broken and contrite heart so you will confess and repent of your sin, which shows that you are not your old self any more.

Therefore: Kill your sin! Sinning as a believer is like abusing yourself! Your old self with its evil practices has already been laid aside, **why do you still want to do them and torture your new self?**

- **“who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him”:** The old self “is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit” (Ephesians 4:22), but the new self is being renewed according to the image of Christ! Once you have your new self, you WILL live out a progressively sanctified life. This is the characteristic feature of the new self.
- **“no distinction between Greek and Jew.....”:** The image of Christ consists of inner characters, such as holiness, justice, truth, love, kindness, and mercy etc.....; and not those of outward appearance, such as race, religious background, language and culture etc.

Summary: Because of God’s wrath against sin, your experience of sin and your new identity in Christ, Christians, kill your sin! If you don’t kill your sin, your sin will kill you.