

Christians must put off the old self by putting it to death because they have been and are being renewed in gospel-knowledge after the image of Christ. Remember there are no higher class Christians based on any earthly differences because Christ the new self is in all. Christ in you is all you need to live for God.

Introduction: The false idea that being a Christian is all about "doing what is right."

I. How Not to Live

A. Sexual sins (v. 5)

1. This list of five sins majors on sexual practices. God emphasizes the importance of bringing this area of life under the Lordship of Christ. God cares very much about your sex life and your thought life about sex. He seeks to keep us pure, that we might enjoy his good gift of sex.
2. The five sins listed and defined. (1) Sexual immorality (porneia) encompasses every kind of sexual activity outside of marriage (one man and one woman), meaning unchastity, prostitution, fornication, and various kinds of unlawful sexual intercourse. (2) Impurity (akatharsia), meaning uncleanness, refuse. (3) Passion (pathos), especially of a sexual nature. (4) Evil desire (epithumia and kakos), meaning the evil forms of eager desire, longing, passion, concupiscence (strong sexual desire). (5) Covetousness (pleonezia), meaning greediness, insatiableness, avarice.

B. Verbal sins (vv. 8-9a)

1. This grouping of sins corrupt and destroy social relationships in the Church: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk. These deal with angry and abusive attitudes and speech. Observe that anger and wrath, when they become heightened and settled, become malice.
2. The six sins listed and defined. (1) Anger (orge), meaning wrath, indignation, judgment. (2) Wrath (thumos), meaning anger, rage. (3) Malice (kakia), meaning badness, faultiness in the sense depravity, wickedness, vice, malice, evil, ill will, malignity. (4) Slander (blasphemia), meaning abusive speech, reproach, blasphemy, a reviling judgment. (5) Obscene talk (aischrologia), meaning evil speech, in the sense of abusive speech, dirty talk. (6) Lying (pseudomai), meaning tell a falsehood, deceive by lying.

C. Proudful sins (v. 11)

This grouping of sins is not explicit, but still quite clear. Paul lists a number of different labels used to divide and thereby discriminate against others. These deal with pride and prejudice, elitism and holier-than-thou, condescension and hatred. (1) Greek and Jew: reason vs. religion. (2) Circumcised and uncircumcised: holy vs. unholy. (3) Barbarian and Scythian: unsophisticated vs. scum of the earth. (4) Slave and free: low vs. high social status.

II. Who Can Not Live Like This?

A. Religious and secular people live (and die) in these sins (vv. 5-7, 11)

Clearly having or practicing a form of religion does not empower people to avoid sin. Secular folks are not doing any better. Even for those religious or secular people who attain a measure of external morality, their hearts are gripped by fear or pride. Fear of slipping up again. Pride in comparing themselves to others. But tragically fear and pride simultaneously feed and devour each other until a person destroys himself.

B. Civilized and barbaric people live (and die) in these sins (vv. 5-7, 11)

If being civilized made people moral, then we'd expect advanced civilizations to grow increasingly moral, and primitive societies to be less moral. But what anthropologists, historians, and sociologists find is that the same sexual, verbal, and proudful sins plague us all.

C. Empowered and disenfranchised people live (and die) in these sins (vv. 5-7, 11)

Are free peoples morally superior to enslaved peoples? Do the haves morally outrank the have-nots? Does attaining power make a formerly powerless man moral? Does being the boss somehow make you less likely to live in these sins compared to your employee? Absurdity.

III. Only Renewed People Can

A. The image of Adam is the old self; the image of Christ is the new self (vv. 9-10)

Old self is earthly and spiritually dead. New self is heavenly and spiritually alive. To be a Christian is to be renewed in the image of God. Only those who are dead to the old self and alive to Christ in the new self are renewed people. There are only two men: Adam and Jesus. You are either still in Adam the natural man of the earth, or you are now in Christ the spiritual man of heaven (1 Corinthians 15:45-50).

B. Sin is a "not-yet-beaten" cancer when Christ is in you (vv. 5-7)

The only wise way to treat your cancer of sin is with Christ who is the only cure. Set your mind on Christ who is your life (Col 3:1-4). When you see that Jesus Christ put on your sin so that you can now put it off, when you see that Christ was put to death on the cross for you to give you a new self, you will find power to more and more put off the old self. He has already given you new life, but you still have to fight the indwelling sin with God's enabling power (1 Corinthians 15:54-58).

C. Practical Instructions

1. Ruthlessly put to death sexual sins (v. 5). Here are a few ideas. (1) Put to death pornography use. (2) Jealously guard the holiness of the marriage bed. (3) Be aware of how easy it is to find someone willing to have illicit sex, and completely avoid the avenues that facilitate it. (4) Stamp out sexual sin in your mind. (5) Visit Harvest USA's website.

2. Repeatedly put off verbal and prideful sins (vv. 8-9). Here are a few ways to practice this. (1) Confess your anger to the person you are angry with. (2) Learn your anger triggers and your boiling point. Ask God for patience and wisdom to recognize when to walk away to keep your temper. (3) Repent of harboring personal vengeance against your enemies. (4) Associate and befriend all kinds of people, especially in the Church, who are different from you. Remember Christ transcends all our differences with other believers. He is in every believer.

3. Relentlessly pursue knowledge of (not merely about) God in Christ (vv. 10-11). Here are a few ideas. (1) God reveals himself in the Bible. If you haven't read the whole book, you need to. (2) God reveals himself through prayer. That is why we are seeking ways to encourage private, small group, and corporate prayer. (3) God reveals himself in the midst of fellowship. Pursue God in Christ with other Christians. (4) Give thanks to God in Jesus' name in everything you do. A thankful heart is a heart putting off the old self and putting on Christ.

Conclusion: A Christian knows he is dead to the old self because that old man died when he was crucified with Christ. But putting off sin by putting it to death is not the only action the Bible calls you to. Once a Christian puts to death her sin, she must also put on character appropriate to her new self, which is Christ. A Christian is not only one who has died to sin, but also one who is alive to God (Col 3:12-17).