

## Session 2: Persistent Pursuit of Godliness

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Preacher: Guest: Terry Wragg

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, thank you, Jeff, for that. And yeah, just to let you guys know a little bit, I have eight grandchildren. My wife graciously says that most of them are held hostage in other states by our children.

We have five in Ohio. We have two in North Carolina and then one up in New Hampshire with my son who's up there. And so it's a joy to be in Florida, and yet it's also a heartache in many ways because we're not around any of them.

And of course, that's what the Lord does at times. He moves you to places that you get to be and serve Him. And family is wonderful. Family is great.

And if you can be around them, the Lord is certainly gracious in those ways. But if you can't, you serve Him anyway. And so that's what we do. Like Jeff said, I left New Hampshire after being up there 18 years.

The church is doing wonderful. We had just brought on a young man, a graduate of the Expositor Seminary, where I have one of the campuses at the church where we're at. And we brought him on.

[ 1 : 05 ] My intent was to have him there for about 10 years and kind of groom him to kind of take over after 10 years. And my nephew out of the blue texted me and said, would it be the impossible dream to have you on staff at my church?

And I said, well, nothing's impossible with God, but what are you talking about? And one thing led to another. And my wife has a medical condition that only heat helps.

And so Florida was obviously something I had not necessarily been praying about in a specific way, but just asking the Lord to give her relief. We lived obviously in New Hampshire where 10 inches of snow is a dusting.

And so we were 18 years up there. The Lord left us there for 18 years. And she graciously served the church and all those kinds of things. And then God brought this opportunity. And I talked to the elders about it, the church about it.

And they just saw the Lord's hand in it. We already had this young man there. And so I said to him, I have to train you to run a marathon in about eight months. And so he's now pastoring that church.

[ 2 : 06 ] And he texts me and calls me on a weekly basis and talks through things. And it's a great joy for me to see that church thriving and operating with the man of God who is there as well.

And he is doing exactly what I had hoped he would do, teaching them the Word of God and leading them in a way that God would have. And so it's a great privilege for me then to leave and be down in Florida now and serve that church.

A much larger church. There's about 450 at the church where I pastor. There's five of us on staff there. I'm the old guy on staff who gets to help all the other young guys on staff.

And so my office door is like a revolving door. They come through all the time. And whether it's seminary students or one of the staff pastors saying, hey, we've got this issue going on.

How do we work through that? And fortunately or unfortunately, because I've been in the church most of my life, even when my father got saved when I was five years old. So I've been around and in the church.

[ 3 : 09 ] And I've seen pretty much the ugliness, the good, the bad, and the ugly in the church. And so nothing really surprises me when I see it. And so that's helpful.

And so I get to be kind of that guy who gets to help and think through those things. And then so it's a great joy for me to do that. But it was really a privilege for me to be up here with you guys and to just be here thinking about what it means to be godly in our lives.

And last night we really just kind of touched on the big umbrella picture, really, this idea of pursuit, this diligence in our own heart to pursue godliness in the best way possible to the glory of the Lord.

And today I want to take our time over the next three sessions and spend our time in the book of Colossians. So if you have your Bibles, open them to Colossians chapter 3. We're going to spend our sessions here for the rest of the day.

And we're going to talk about really dressing in the clothes of godliness. We talked about the determination to be godly. Now what does that really look like? So this is a practical outworking of godliness in our lives.

[ 4 : 24 ] And chapter 3 really hones in on this as the Apostle Paul writes to the church in Colossae. And really I want to spend our time in verses 5 through 13, even though the chapter goes all the way down in this section farther, particularly in verse 17.

But we just don't have time to cover all of that in our time this week. Even if I spent our time in Colossians the whole time, we wouldn't have had enough sessions to really cover everything. So I want to just hone it down in these last three times to this. And really particularly this morning as we start in verses 5 through 11.

So I want to read this for us and then we'll get into it together. He says, Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

For it is on occasion of these things the wrath of God will come, and in them you also once walked when you were living in them. But now you also put them all aside, anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech from your mouth.

[ 5 : 46 ] Do not lie to one another since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to the true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him, a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian and Scythian, slave and free men, but Christ is all and in all.

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

As we begin our time this morning, I want to ask you a question. Have you ever been confused by something that just didn't really make sense?

I mean, you saw something or you heard someone say something, and it was one of those, what's wrong with this picture?

It just doesn't seem to click. You ever had those moments in your own mind? Of course we have. I was traveling this summer.

[ 7 : 10 ] My wife and I had the opportunity to go over to Europe, and one of the places we stopped was Pompeii. And it was fascinating to see all that, but it reminded me as I was reading from one author who was talking about this idea of seeing things that didn't make sense.

He said, I don't know anyone who would build a summer home at the base of Mount Vesuvius. Well, they did that in the ancient days, and it was covered, and Mount Vesuvius is still there, and Napoli, Italy, or Naples, Italy is right there.

Doesn't seem to make sense. He said it would be tough trying to get campers to pitch their tents where Bigfoot was spotted. No family would be interested in vacationing in a houseboat up the Suez Canal or swimming in the Amazon near a school of piranhas.

He said, I mean, some things make no sense at all, like lighting a match to see if there's any gas in the empty tank, or stroking a rhino to see if it's tame.

They have names for those kinds of people. They call them victims, he said. And yet, there are Christians running loose today who flirt with risks far greater than any one of those mentioned.

[ 8 : 34 ] And they do it with such calm faces that you'd think they have ice in their veins. You would never guess that these are balancing on a tight wire of disaster without a net.

He said, who are these people? Well, they're the ones who rewrite the Bible to accommodate their own lifestyles. Outwardly, they appear to be your basic believer, but down inside, he said, operation rationalization is taking place.

They're experts at rephrasing or explaining away the painful truth of Scripture. And then he gave some examples. He said they accommodate theology this way.

They say things like, God just wants me happy. God just wants me happy. I mean, I can't be happy married to this person, and so I'm leaving, and I know God will understand that.

Or, there was a time when that might have been considered immoral, but not today. After all, the Lord gave me the desire, so he must want me to enjoy it.

[ 9 : 46 ] Or they say, look, nobody's perfect. I know I got in deeper than I should have, but what's grace all about anyway? Or, hey, you know, life's short.

Too short to worry about the small things. He said, whenever they run across biblical truth that attacks their position, they just alter it to accommodate their life.

That way, there's no felt guilt, and all the desires they have are fulfilled. I was thinking about that and thinking, you know, people who are like that and profess to know Christ are like that oxymoron thing.

It just doesn't make sense. It's something that just doesn't compute. They're walking oxymorons. They're walking, they're like, we use the joke, right?

Jumbo shrimp. It's an oxymoron. Military intelligence, right? I know there's some military guys here. I was one of them. And sometimes the military isn't so intelligent.

[ 10 : 50 ] Right? They're oxymorons because what we know about Christ, or we just put it in the category, our theology, what we know about Christ must have an effect on our lives, or we better doubt whether we know Christ at all, right?

I mean, if we claim to know Christ, if we claim to be following Jesus, shouldn't that have an effect on our lives? And if there's no effect, shouldn't it be that the natural thing is to doubt whether we actually know Christ?

Well, for the biblical writers, theology was always followed by a call to live it out. This is how they wrote. This is how they live. This is what we have even before us here this morning.

This is the Apostle Paul's words about Jesus Christ. It's a call for each one of us who professes to know Jesus Christ, who claims to have a relationship to Christ.

It's a call for us to dress in the clothing of godliness, to put on that kind of clothes. And for the Apostle Paul, he's writing to these believers that issue that doctrine demands duty.

[ 12 : 05 ] What you understand about God, what you understand about Jesus Christ, what you understand about your salvation, demands that you live in a way that shows that.

And they needed to be following that in their own behavior. And here in this text, it's laid out for us by way of three commands. Three commands.

If a Christian, if you and I as men are going to dress in the clothes of godliness, then we must first make sure that we have taken off the clothes of ungodliness.

In other words, it makes no sense for us to dress ourselves with the clothes of godliness if we're just putting them over the clothing of ungodliness.

It doesn't make any sense. So right here, we receive by Paul three commands to take off or to put off the things that make no sense to who we are in Jesus Christ.

[ 13 : 10 ] So if you're taking notes, here they are. I'll list them for us so you can win the quiz. All right, here it is. Number one, persistently put off the garment of physical pleasure.

Let me say it again. Persistently put off the garment of physical pleasure. You might even write in parentheses next to that, sensuality. Number two, persistently put off the garment of prideful power. Persistently put off the garment of prideful power. And you might put in parentheses next to that, selfishness. And three, persistently put off the garment of personal persuasion.

Personal persuasion. So let's begin to look at these this morning with our hearts open to what God will tell us from the words of the Apostle Paul so that we who know Christ will persistently live this out in our lives.

We'll pursue that godliness as we've been exhorted to pursue and as the Scriptures teach us to pursue. So number one, persistently put off the garment of physical pleasure or sensuality.

[ 14 : 34 ] Notice what he says here in verses five through seven. Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come and in them you also once walked when you were living in them. Now as we begin, I want us to notice right out of the gate in the words here that this whole reality of putting off begins in the mind.

Begins in the mind. Right? Paul says, consider the members of your earthly body as dead. Consider the members of your earthly body as dead.

Some of your versions might say, put to death the members of your earthly body. Those are interesting words by way of translation because people sometimes take those words and misinterpret these words to mean physically injure yourself.

Do some physical injury to yourself to gain victory over some kind of particular sin. And they'll refer to verses like Matthew 5.29 where Jesus says, if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. [15:56] And they'll say, see, that's what it means. In fact, I was reading of a man in England years ago who used to steal. And in the early years of England, if you stole something and you got caught, the punishment was they would remove the hand that you used to do the stealing.

Well, this particular man continued to steal even after that happened. Even after they removed his hand. And so, as a consequence, his other hand was removed. And amazingly, the man continued to steal.

He would just go and use his mouth. Take it with his teeth. Why? Because physical harm to the body could not bring change to his heart.

Physical harm, removal of even the most necessary of things couldn't change what needed to be changed where the desire for what was not his was born.

It was born in the heart. And so, what Jesus Christ meant in Matthew 5 and what Paul is calling for here is not the mutilation of the body, but rather the complete elimination of anything in our lives that's contrary or against godliness.

[17:16] And we saw some of that last night even in Psalm 101 as we were examining David's life. In other words, the place to start is to be completely settled on the accomplished fact that your old self is dead.

Completely settled on the reality that who you were before Christ and all of that that you engaged in before Christ has died. Now, let me just remind us what the Apostle Paul said in the book of Romans about this very same thing.

Romans 8 and verse 13. You don't have to turn there. We'll just talk about it for a moment. He said, For if you live according to the flesh, if you live according to the flesh, you will die.

But if you live by the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. In other words, the battle with sin is common to all of us even though we believe in Jesus Christ.

The battle against the flesh is there. Paul even had to war against this. But it can be won when we yield ourselves to the control of the Spirit in our lives.

[18:41] In fact, this is even exactly what Galatians tells us in Galatians chapter 5. Just listen to these phenomenal words of the Apostle Paul as he's writing to the church in Galatia, these believers, and he's astonished that they would turn away from the truth they heard.

And in verse 16 of chapter 5, he says, I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

Now there's the key right there to the beginning of putting off the things that we need to put off. If you walk by the Spirit, it's a guarantee that you will not be doing the things of the flesh.

Because the Spirit isn't involved in those things. But if you're doing those things, you can be rest assured that you are not walking by the Spirit. Now there's a self-diagnostic tool, right?

In my life, in this moment, in my thoughts, whatever it is I'm doing, I can tell right now immediately whether I'm walking by the Spirit or walking by the flesh. If it's sinful, I'm not walking by the Spirit.

[20:02] So the real desire of the new self, the real desire of the new inner man is to live a life that's pleasing to God. It's to live a life that's reflecting all that we are because Christ lives in us.

But often, that's held back. It's held back by the ingrained patterns of our sinful flesh. And even though we are new creatures in Christ, through the power of God as He's regenerated us and given us the faith to believe in Him, we still live, oftentimes because of our own choices in the graveyard of our flesh.

And our bodies can either be instruments of righteousness or instruments of unrighteousness. That all depends on to whom you are yielding in the moment. Is it our flesh or is it the Spirit?

So what Paul is commanding here is for us to yield ourselves to the Spirit persistently. You say, how do I do that? Well, you do that by not yielding to the flesh.

Right? And so here he says, notice in verse 5, therefore, that refers back to verses 1 through 4. What is that? That's about our aspirations.

[21:23] Our aspirations to be for the things of Christ. Our disposition is to be for the things of Christ. Right? If you've been raised up with Christ, then keep seeking the things above where Christ

is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things of the earth. Why? Because you've died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. So when Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with human glory.

See, that's our aspiration. Seek Christ. Our focus, our disposition is to be for the things of Christ. Christ. So listen, the reason that we fail, you might say, well, why does it I fail so much? The reason we fail at times to win against the onslaught of sin, the reason sometimes we're not godly, is because sin, it's not, it's not because sin is just so powerful that you can't overcome.

Some people say, I just can't. I can't is not a word for the Christian. We have the Spirit of God. There's nothing impossible with God. So it's not because sin is so powerful I can't win.

[ 22 : 32 ] No, the reason I lose is simply because I do not yield to the Spirit by considering myself dead to those fleshly desires. I keep living in the grave clothes of my old life.

By the way, just as a side note, understanding this would have really, really struck a chord with the believers in Colossae. Because part of the deception that had infiltrated the church there was the philosophy of Gnosticism.

Gnosticism, just a theological term that talks about Gnosis, knowing, that's what it means. And we don't, I don't want to get into a sidetrack on a theological diatribe on Gnosticism, but suffice it to say that Gnosticism taught that the spiritual or the immaterial part of creation, that that was good.

That that hadn't been tainted by sin. The material part of creation, that's what was corrupted by evil. And the material part couldn't be changed back to being good.

It was just the immaterial part that was good. And that's a really important distinction for us to understand because even though there were other nuances to Gnosticism, material was evil, immaterial was good.

[ 23 : 55 ] That's the idea. And all of that meant that whatever was done in the material body, well, I couldn't help it. That's okay. It's just part of evil. No big deal.

Because it's part of evil, it can't be redeemed anyway, so whatever I do in the body and in the context of this passage, whatever I do by way of my own sinful pleasures, no big deal, no real impact on my spiritual life, don't worry about it.

But that couldn't be farther from the truth. That's why Paul says in verses 3 and 4, you've died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

And when Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. The question is, how's it going to look? How's it going to look?

We've died with Christ, we've been raised up with Christ, one day will be revealed with Christ. So in light of all of that, Paul says, persistently put off the garment of physical pleasure.

[ 25 : 01 ] Discipline yourself for godliness. So just to make sure we're all on the same page this morning, what Paul is saying in general is that the body, we could call it here, the Christian life, is to be holy, is to be set apart, is to be under the control of the Spirit of God.

And the body will do what the inner disposition tells it to do. I was telling our people down in Florida just this last week, listen, when we sin, in that moment, we are religious hypocrites.

They were like, really? Yes. Why? Because we say we love Jesus. And John says, in John 13, Jesus says, if you love me, you'll what?

Keep my commandments. Well, if I'm not keeping his commandments, what's the implication? I don't love him. Well, in that moment when I'm sinning, I'm not loving him. So I'm a religious hypocrite.

I say I love him, but I'm not loving him. Why? Because I don't want to do what the Spirit in me is pricking my conscience to do.

[ 26 : 19 ] I'm putting that aside. My disposition tells me I should be doing something different, and I'm not. But a Spirit-controlled body will do what is pleasing to God.

And a Christian life that is persistently putting off the garment of sin will be ready and able to put on the garments of righteousness. So Paul first says, put off the garment of physical pleasure here in verse 5, and then in verses 6 and 7 he gives reasons why.

So let's look at these and notice this is progressive in nature. Okay? Just so you know by way of your note-taking in our time frame, we're not going to get much farther than verse 5 right now.

Okay? We'll get back. We'll work our way down. But right now we're going to deal with these issues in verse 5. But it's progressive in nature.

What do I mean by that? I mean that one builds on the other. In other words, one contributes to the other and it goes from specific to general. So Paul starts out with the sinful act and he moves backwards to the motive that underlies it.

[ 27 : 35 ] That's the idea here. In other words, we need to see it this way. We need to see it this way. An act of immorality takes place because of impurity.

And impurity is welcomed because of a debased passion and evil desire which finds its root in greed and all of that amounts to idolatry.

That's the idea. That's the progression. And so we can say when someone falls into the sin of immorality as an act, they really haven't fallen very far, have they?

Why? Because it's not as if they woke up one morning as righteous and just said, oh, I think I'm going to go do this immoral act. No, it was a process. It's a progression. They got them there so when they fall, they don't fall very far.

They're already there. It's one small step at a time. Now, the other reality about this is that we need to remember that Paul is not giving us an exhaustive list here.

[ 28 : 41 ] Right? In fact, we're going to see another list in verse 9. And both of those are just lists of common things, common realities and sins of the heart, realities of life that each and every one of us face.

It's like Paul said to the Corinthian church, no temptation has seized you except what is common to man. It's all common. You know, it's not like, well, I got something that nobody else got.

No, it's all the same. It's born in the same place. It manifests itself in different ways, but it's all born in the same place. So then, first of all, says, what is it we're to put off then?

What is this dead life stuff we're supposed to get rid of? Right? Consider your members of your earthly body as dead to, first of all, immorality. Immorality.

The word, like last night, is the word pornea. It's where we get our English word pornographic or pornography. And I know, guys, you probably came to this conversation and said, I know this is going to be touched on.

[ 29 : 46 ] In your own mind, you're thinking, you know, it's a men's conference. Right? This is a men's struggle. No, it's a sin struggle of the Christian. Pornea, the act or expression of sexual sin in whatever form.

And I don't think we need to have a list of every form of sexual sin in our day for us to understand the incessant nature and destructive desires that that does in the heart.

Pornography, as I said last night, in our country, whether it's written or whether it's actual forms, is a multi-billion dollar industry that has affected every secular avenue of life.

And in the Apostle Paul's day, this call to put to death in one's life, this issue, was a radical thing. It was as radical as you could get. Paul says, put it off. It constitutes a great threat to your sanctification. It constitutes a great reality whereby devastation will happen for you if you're involved with it, if it's entertained, if it's acted upon, because, notice the second word in the list, impurity.

[ 31 : 05 ] Impurity. That's the word uncleanness. That's the idea. It's more general, but it really speaks of how someone gets to the point of acting out the sin of immorality, impurity.

In other words, it's because they are feeding themselves with unclean things. In other words, this speaks to the thoughts and intentions of our mind.

A mind feeding on unclean things, sensory parts of our body that are accepting and welcoming unclean words and images, a mind that's not offended by sexual pollution of our day is an unclean mind.

It's the very opposite of what Paul said we are to have our minds dwell on in Philippians 4.8.

Whatever is true and right and just of good repute, let your mind dwell on these things, Paul said.

So allowing our eyes to remain on the unclean is this idea of impurity. We all know that's in our society. Each one of us is bombarded.

[ 32 : 20 ] You were driving here today, surely you woke up this morning and if you turned the TV on, you were already bombarded by images, words, that feed your fleshly desire for personal pleasure.

Right? It affects the mind. Why? Because it gets to the real us. Jesus said it in this way, Mark 7, verse 21 and following, from within, out of the heart of men proceed the evil thoughts, the fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness.

It's like I said, we behave, our outworking is a reflection of how we're thinking. And so the battle over sin begins there in the mind.

Consider the members of your self dead, the members of your body dead. The battle over sin begins in our minds, especially when it comes to sexual sin. Sinful behavior begins with sinful thinking.

Pure and righteous behavior will come from pure and righteous thinking. I've been a pastor nearly 30 years now in the church, 57 years of my life.

[ 33 : 44 ] And I never thought I'd be shocked by anything and surprised by anything until recently. I had a man come in my office.

Well, he called me on the phone first, wanted to make an appointment, came in my office at the church. And I said, what's going on? And he said, well, I really made a mistake. Yeah, what happened?

He said, well, I was sitting there one day on my iPad and an ad came up. And I saw the ad and I just clicked on it and that took me down the road.

And next thing you know, I'm looking at pictures of women and I didn't have clothes on and I'm looking at these pictures and I just kept doing it and kept doing it.

He said, then my wife came in the room and I had to say to her what was happening. And he said, so we, she was upset. I was trying to help her and so she went to take a shower and you know what?

[ 34 : 46 ] I went and got to the TV and found some on the TV. And what shocked me about that was not that that was happening.

What shocked me about that, guys, is this. This man is an 84-year-old man who used to be a pastor for over 30 years.

And so we began to meet together and he began to tell me about his life.

How he treated women. How he thought about women. And his joking and things like this. And there was a pattern in his life where women were just an object of visual pleasure.

And I, he made that a habit in his life. And never arrested that in his life. Never challenged himself in his life. And even said words to me like, well, you know, as an 84-year-old man everything else doesn't seem to be working because that's what happens when you get old.

[ 35 : 53 ] And so, I mean, God put that in me to desire that. I said, no. No. And here is, listen, what shocked me was this.

The flesh never gives up. 84-year-old man never gives up. Why do we go down the road of evil thinking even as Christians at times?

Because our passions and evil desires are right there. This is what Paul says. you're dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire.

It's a stair step. And so, in diagnosing our own sin problem and the why of it all, immorality acts itself out because of the embracing of impurity in my own mind.

And the impurity is there because of the entertainment of the impurity in my mind over time. I've just let it be. Never arrested it. Never caused it to stop.

[ 37 : 05 ] I said, brother, this is why it's happening to you because over years you've created 40, 50 years of a habit where you've never arrested that in your mind.

And so, to you, it was no big deal. And then there's the entertainment of that impurity in our mind because of shameful passions and desires.

We convince ourselves through rationality, well, this is how God made me. Passions is that word pathos. It, in and of itself, isn't a bad word.

We ought to have passion. But it, it has to be for the right things. Right? We can have passion for a lot of things that we shouldn't have passion for. We need to have passion for the right stuff.

far too often, our passion is for those things that are not the right stuff. They're the things that we feed our flesh on. Right? I mean, this man even said to me as he's in his age to life with his wife, what they do is sit and watch the Hallmark Channel.

[ 38 : 14 ] And he said, but the women on there are beautiful. I said, you have to stop watching the Hallmark Channel. He said, really? Yes. He said, but they're not undressed women.

I said, I know, but what you do with them in your mind is the problem. He said, but that's how my wife and I spend time. I said, you're going to have to find a different way to spend time. This is an 84-year-old man.

All he has is time. In fact, James says this is the reason that there's so much fighting in our world, even amongst Christians.

James 4, you have a desire, a passion. And you can't have it, so what do you do? You fight to get it. In other words, instead of you controlling it, you allow it to control you.

And so what happens? You begin to destroy relationships for your own pleasure satisfaction. I want it. This is my expectation.

[ 39 : 21 ] I must have it. It's evil desires. In other words, the act of immorality is fed by the sexual lust created in our mind.

That evil desire, that epithumia, that's the word there, the strong desire, this wicked, strong desire within us. This passion has been taken over by the evilness in us and the physical is fed by the mental.

Go over to 1 Thessalonians for just a second. 1 Thessalonians, Paul puts these two words together in one verse.

1 Thessalonians chapter 4. Beginning in verse 3, he says, for this is the will of God, your sanctification.

That ought to arrest our attention just in and of itself. Here's God's will for your life. What is that? Your holiness, your set-apartness. That's God's will for you.

[ 40 : 40 ] People are saying all the time, I don't know what God's will for me. Well, here it is. This is part of it. He wants you to be holy. So how do I do that? You abstain from sexual immorality that you know how to possess your own vessel.

That word there is the word for body. In sanctification, honor, in holiness and purity, not in, here it is, lustful passion. That's that strong desire with that pathos.

Not like the Gentiles. In other words, not like those who don't know God. That's how the world lives. The world seeks that, drives for it, goes after it, has no issue with it.

That's not us. So Paul is saying that it is completely antithetical to who you are. It's not who you are. It's not who we are.

Those who claim Christ and live like those who don't know Christ. It's totally antithetical. It's oxymoronic. So if you know Christ and your aspiration is for godliness because your disposition is for godliness, then put off the garment of personal pleasure.

[ 41 : 55 ] See, if your aspiration is to be like Christ and your disposition is to be like Christ, then you ought to be putting off that. Why?

Because notice, notice here in verse 5 that all of it is rooted in greed. It's rooted in the love of self. I love that. Someone comes to the office and says, I got a problem with immorality. Well, you're a greedy man. What? What are you talking about? Right?

We read this word greed, we think it's out of place. It doesn't seem to fit the list. Why? Because we typically think of greed, when we think of greed, it's all about money.

It's all about material goods. Those kinds of things. Right? I want more of that. I want more money. Someone who's been on getting all that they can get. Sure, that's greed.

[ 42 : 52 ] It describes that kind of person. But what Paul wants us to know here about our heart is that any drive to have more is greed.

I don't care what it is. Any drive to get what you ought not have or what God has not given you is greed. In other words, it's the insatiable desire to have more, to have what is forbidden by God or what God has not given you.

greed says, you know what, God? You're not good enough. I know the Bible says you're good, but you haven't given me what I want.

Therefore, you're not good enough. You have not really met my need. And so, what am I going to do? I'm going to go get it myself. I'm going to get it myself.

That's what this man said to me. Listen, God gave me the desire. God, I have a desire to be sexually satisfied. And because you haven't met my need, whether that's in a marriage context or outside of a marriage context as a single person, because my need, as I've defined it, is not met, I'll get it myself.

[ 44 : 16 ] I'll get it through images. I'll get it through self-gratification. I'll get it through whatever desire I have. Why? Because it's greed that drives that desire.

I'll get it through self-gratification. I'll get it through self-gratification. I'll get it through self-gratification. I'll get it through self-gratification. Several years ago, I was reading out of a little

devotional that I'm not recommending, but Our Daily Bread.

You've probably heard of those. Little books on a crumb of Bible time in your life. That's what I call them. Our Daily Bread.

There was a short story in there that I think illustrates this. It was a story of a rich man who was disturbed when he found a fisherman on the dock sitting beside his boat.

And so he asked the guy, why aren't you fishing? And the man answered, because I've caught enough fish for today. And the guy said, well, why don't you go and catch more fish than you need? [ 45 : 19 ] And he said, why would I need to do that? Well, you could earn more money. You could buy a better boat. And then you could get bigger nets. And you could go deeper in the water.

You could catch more fish. And you could make more money. And then what would I do? He said. Well, you could then just sit down and enjoy life. And the guy said, well, what do you think I'm doing now?

I'm just enjoying life. Caught enough. Now. You see, that's what the deception of greed does, guys. It feeds our desires.

And it says, if you get that, if you have that, then you'll be satisfied. Then your need will be met. Paul says, this is what's behind immorality. Immorality is that outworking act which is built on the foundation of impurity which comes from the passions and evil desires of the heart which really says, I need that.

[ 46 : 29 ] I'm going to get it myself. It's born out of greed. So it really doesn't matter if it's a material thing or an immaterial thing. It's always fed by greed. The desire to have more.

To have what is not right. To have what is forbidden. That's what drives sexual immorality. Greed. Greed places itself above God. That's why Paul ends this verse with these words. Which amounts to idolatry.

There's the key. There's the key. Remember last night when David in Psalm 1 began with what? Worship.

Right? I will praise God for His loving kindness and His justice. Paul is saying, listen here, it all is about worship. Who are you worshiping?

[ 47 : 32 ] This is idolatry. Right? This is the key. Immorality is just idol worship.

And the idol that we're worshiping is us. It's me. I've now created a God of my own making and boy, I love Him because He looks and acts just like me. We know this.

We just don't sometimes think about it in all these terms. But this is the root cause of all sin. In fact, one commentator put it this way.

I think it's worth repeating for us as we kind of wrap this up. It is a sin with a very wide range, he said. Idolatry.

It's a sin with a very wide range. If it's the desire for money, it leads to the theft in all of its forms. If it's a desire for prestige, then it leads to evil ambition.

[ 48 : 31 ] If it's for power, then it leads to a sadistic tyranny. And if it's a desire for a person, then it leads to sexual sin.

He's right. He's right. When we sin, idolatry is always the root. My worship of me.

So why don't we put off the garment of physical pleasure? Why or why do we want to?

Why should we want to do that? Notice verse 6 and 7. This is the reason. Because it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come.

And in them you also once walked when you were living in them. Why do you want to pursue godliness?

[ 49 : 29 ] Why do you want to put off those things? In verse 5, because the wrath of God. Because it makes no sense in light of who you are.

Right? The wrath of God is because of all of that, God's wrath is out there. Christ paid for that if you're in Christ. You used to live in them.

You once were like that. These are not you anymore. Get rid of them. Don't put on, don't try to put righteousness over them. God hates sin.

That means we should also. Right? Because he hates it, his wrath came. And it will come again on those who continue in it without repentance.

Why? Because sin always brings wrath. Sin never tells you that. What sin tells you is you'll be happy doing this. This will be just what has served your life. It will give you everything you want to have.

[ 50 : 35 ] And yet we all know it's going to keep you longer than you want to stay and cost you more than you want to pay. happiness. It's never happiness.

So why would anyone who hates or who has the riches of heaven, why would anyone who has been given everything they need for life and godliness by the creator of the world, the one who knows you better than anything, in each and every moment he's always doing what is good and right for you, why would anyone who has all of that and has the riches of heaven in Christ ever desire to return to the place of unredeemed poverty?

none of us should want that. And so my exhortation to us this morning, just in this first session, is let each one of us persistently put off the garment of physical pleasure as we discipline ourselves for God.

Let's start there and see just what that does for our life. God, well, there's more to come obviously, but we'll get to that in the next session.

So let's pray. Father, thank you for our time here this morning just in this first session. What a penetrating words from your servant the Apostle Paul, as he has, by your spirit, fed us so richly in this truth.

[ 52 : 12 ] There are so many ways in which our own heart could even now be deceiving us and telling us, oh, you're okay when we're not. God, so Lord, I would pray that you would use these things to challenge us, cause us to examine ourselves, to cause us to be in each other's lives more and more and allow the dark places of our heart to be shared with brothers in Christ who would come alongside us, help us, walk with us, encourage us, challenge us.

Lord, use that in the lives of each one of these men, that this church might be a place where when people walk in these doors, they say, boy, you know the guys of that church, they are godly men. May you receive all the glory for that, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.