

The Battle in Your Mind

To Abstain from Sexual Sin (*Part 10*)

Tim Conway | *The Battle With Sin Series* | illbehonest.com

Last week I wanted to lay down some foundations for sexual sin from the standpoint that, basically, if you're justified, the faith that justifies, the faith that saves from the wrath of God, must be a faith that breaks the dominion of sin in your life. The faith that saves us from the wrath of God must be a faith that saves us from sexual immorality. And if that faith doesn't save from the power of sexual temptation and lust, then it will not save you from the wrath of God. Now as I said, obviously we're never talking perfection; but we are talking about a faith that puts you into all out battle against sexual temptation.

You know, we had a big group with us last week; a bunch of visitors from Alabama and Georgia. And I didn't know where they were coming from, I didn't know what kind of churches they had, so I wanted to hit this thing from that standpoint. But the purpose of this series all along has been to equip the believer. It isn't so much that I want to come along and try to convince people in this series that they're lost. I want to give the Christian tools to fight the battle. Peter says in 1 Peter 2:11, "To abstain from these passions that wage war against the soul." And I'll tell you, one of the passions that wages war, especially with men, is sexual lust. It's sexual temptation. I mean, it is a sin that takes out its thousands and its tens of thousands.

So how do we abstain? Here's the commandment; here's the imperative the Lord gives us through the apostle: "Abstain from these passions." How do I do it? Okay, we know they're there. Look, men, by and large, it may be sexual desire may be stronger. I mean it is, typically. Not in every case, but typically. That's just the reality. But it's not only a problem in men, obviously it's a problem in women as well. And as my wife fills me in, that you know, men are visually driven, their desires are visually stirred. My wife tells me with ladies there's emotional satisfaction in wanting to have a man, wanting to be loved; and a willingness to put that body out there in an attempt to get the love, to get that kind of attention. Look, the passion that drives a man may be a little bit different than the passion that drives a woman. In other words, a man may be seeking purely sexual gratification, while a woman may not be seeking that so much as emotional gratification. And yet, she's willing to take the same course to try to come to that end. You have two people that maybe their ends are different, but they're willing to go about it the same way. And so, basically, what we have are these things are fighting against the soul. How do we abstain? Where does the battle rage? How do we fight it?

Now look, I know, increasingly, it's so obvious to me, and I hope it is to you. I want it to be to you. Somebody read Romans 12:2. "I urge you therefore, brethren, based upon the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. And do not be conformed to this

world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may know what the good, perfect, and pleasing will of God is."

Look, you've got your body. You know what's amazing to me, especially after I studied? Here you have Peter, saying that these passions wage war against the soul. And I think so often we think that way: Spirit, soul, that's where the battle is. Sometimes we kind of relegate the body. We don't see it to be near as important as what it seems like in the Scripture. Especially in Romans, as I studied it, it was interesting that if you're living in the flesh, you're going to die. But if, by the Spirit, you put to death - not just sin, but it's interesting - deeds of the body. It's saying, "Offer your body." We're to be these living sacrifices.

And here's the way, we need to be geared towards the will of God. And that comes about through a renewing of the mind; which he also says in Ephesians, "We need to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, putting on the new man that's created after the likeness of God." It's really the mind. Mindsets are where this battle is fought. Now you just tell me this. Look, I'm not talking right now about the lost. You were lost. Everybody in this room was lost. You know how you dealt with sexual temptation. You know why you gave place to it. And I suppose that the reasons that a lost person would give place to it, we can probably drag that over into the Christian realm.

But I want you to tell me this: Christians fall into sexual sin. Why? In other words, what's going on in the mind? Look, there's never a vacuum up here when people fall into sin. Certain thoughts, certain reasonings, certain deductions, certain logic. There's thoughts that fill the mind. Now a person may try not to think about certain things, but he's definitely thinking about something, or she is thinking about something. I want to ask you this: What mindset controls a man or a woman, a Christian man or a woman, who gives place with the eyeball and looks with lust; gives place to something like Internet pornography or masturbation; or actually falls into the actual sin with the person of the opposite sex? And far be it from me to say that it's not possible for a Christian to fall into sex with somebody of the same sex. I mean, we obviously have examples in the Scripture. We know that it can happen. We see Christians that were involved in it being strongly rebuked. We see Paul, the way he spoke to the Corinthians. Obviously, some things were going on in that church that he was dealing very hard with. We have some examples of sexual sin being a problem in the New Testament. Obviously, we have, at least, one or two notable cases in the Old Testament. What goes on in the mind? What's happening?

(From the room) They're not viewing the glory of Christ at that moment.

Tim: They're not viewing the glory of Christ at that moment. Let's think about that. When Peter saw Jesus manipulate the fish and fill the net, what did he do? He worshiped. In fact, he told Him, "Lord, depart from me." What did Isaiah do when he saw the Lord high and lifted up in the Temple? He fell down on his face, "Woe is me!" You know, when God has been seen, when the glories of Christ came through; what did Peter do when that voice spoke out on the mount of transfiguration? I'll tell you, he was utterly terrified.

Can I tell you this, I mean, this is a thought that hits right on what Jonathan just said. Highly unlikely. Now I'm not saying this in jest. I'm saying this in dead seriousness. Isaiah is not going to watch Internet pornography and masturbate, when he's on his face in the presence of Christ; when he has an awareness of Christ high, lifted up, full of glory. He's already struck. "I'm a man of unclean lips; I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips."

I'll tell you this, you watch your step. Do you remember when Nadab and Abihu were consumed? Aaron did not find fault with God. The Scripture says he held his peace. You can bet he did. Remember, a certain man puts his hand out, touches the ark, he's dead. David did not go home that day, and have Bathsheba come to his house, and sleep with her. That's huge. He did it another day, but he didn't do it that day. Why not? He was terrified. The presence and reality of God and God's glory. God was fearful to him. He didn't run off and do that that day. Brethren, I'll tell you what, when you have a sense of Christ and His glory, it's very difficult to run off into sin. One of the reasons that we so cheaply do things like this is because we lose a sense of the glory of God. And that takes place in the mind. In the mind is where we fear. In the mind is where we believe. In the mind is where we contemplate what God is like. I mean, Job already told us that he had made a covenant with his eyes. Do you think when the Lord appeared to him out of the storm, out of the tornado there, that all of a sudden he was going to break the covenant right on that day? He says, "I repent in dust and ashes." I guarantee you, Moses, that day up there on the mount when the Lord revealed His hindquarters to him, He could not see His face. He couldn't see the whole deal. His face shone. Can you imagine the glory that he saw, so much so that the people were terrified by the glow that came off of his face? Moses could come down off the mountain, and find the people engaged in sexual immorality. But I guarantee you, after having experiences like that up on the mountain with the Lord, he didn't walk down and go dive into it. Why? He had just seen the Lord.

You know what? When your devotional time, just like I was talking about Sunday, when you guys go to the Scriptures, you need to behold glory. You need to gaze upon glory. This comes right out of 2 Corinth. 3:18. Look, if you're not finding glory - the glory of Christ, the glory of the Father, the glory of the Spirit, in the Scriptures when you go to read, that's a bad place to be. Because you're not being sanctified, you're not being transformed, unless you're seeing the glory. Very difficult. Very difficult. When you come up off your knees, or come out of your closet after you've been looking at the Word of God, and you've been staggered by the holiness, by the awesomeness, by the bigness, by the mighty hand of God; when you begin to see God, when you tremble at who He is, when you fear Him - He talks about the man who trembles at His Word - when you come away and you feel that kind of trembling, have you ever read Habakkuk? Full of trembling. Brethren I'll tell you, you don't find a person in the Scriptures, I mean, can you imagine the Apostle John? He fell down on his face just looking at angels twice. He fell down as dead when it was Christ. When you begin to get a view of Christ, when you begin to see His glory; very hard, very hard.

So what mindset leads to sexual sin? The mindset that Christ isn't glorious; that Christ isn't big; that God the Father is Santa Claus, the big man upstairs. Diminished views. Just small views of God. Little God. Not very terrifying. Just far off. Not very near. I'll tell you another one. And it's very closely attached to this. Do you know why, when you're like Job, and you just beheld God appearing to you in the whirlwind, why you don't break the covenant with your eyeballs and go look upon a maid? Because there is a terrifying fear of offending the Lord. You've seen who He is.

Brethren, what mindsets lead to sexual sin? When offending God no longer terrifies us. Now listen to me. 2 Samuel 12. You guys can turn there if you have your Bible. 2 Samuel 12:1. You know this, but I want you to see it. I want you to feel this. You see, this is where the battle is fought. Renewed in the spirit of your mind. When the temptation comes, you've got to think the right way. You've got to have high thoughts of God; high thoughts of Christ; high thoughts of the Spirit. You need to see Him for what He is. The reason that Isaiah wouldn't have gone out into that sin right at that moment is because he saw the Lord. He saw Him for what He was. Even there, he didn't see the full deal. Moses didn't. We can't see the full deal because God is infinite. But it's when you have views of at least part of Him. You have revelations of Him. Isn't that what Paul was praying for for the Ephesians? Isn't that what he prayed for? that they might have wisdom, revelation of the knowledge of Him. I'll tell you this, why? Why pray that for people? Because when people have a revelation of God, it drives sin away. When people have a revelation of God, and of His glory, sin isn't easy. When they see God in His awesome glory, His splendor; when that's revealed, it is a sin-killer.

Now listen to this, 2 Samuel 12:1, you know the account. David has been with Bathsheba. "And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, 'There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.' Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, 'As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.'"

Now watch this. "Nathan said to David, 'You are the man!' Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why - listen to this. Here's what I want you to see - Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in His sight? Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'" And then in verse 13, "David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.'" And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also

has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, - look at this - because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die." In verse 9, he says, "You despised the word of the LORD." In verse 10, he says, "You've despised Me." And in verse 14, he says, "You have utterly scorned the LORD."

Let me tell you something. You let this fill your mindset. When you look at a woman to lust after her; ladies, you lust after a man; you view pornography; you give place to sexual immorality; you notice, God doesn't come right to David, and say, "David, I can't believe it. You blew it. You dishonored the marriage covenant, and you had such little honor for marriage." Or, "You had such little honor for human life. I can't believe it, David, how could you kill somebody?" He said, "David, your sin is against Me." Remember how David said it when he confessed that sin? What did he say? "Against You, and You only, have I sinned." Let me tell you this. Sometimes we can think, "Well, God is not really affected by this." Oh, you don't believe that. You view pornography on the Internet, you know what He is saying to you right through these words? "You are scorning Me." Remember what we read last week? It comes right out of 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8, "For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness." This is where he's dealing with sexual immorality. "Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God." You scorn God. You disregard God. You dishonor, you despise Him. Don't ever forget that. When you give place to sexual immorality, you despise Him. He takes it as a personal affront against His Person. You remember that. Let that ring in your ears, especially you young guys. Let that ring in your ears. You're walking before the Lord, you scorn Him. You disregard Him. You dishonor Him. How was it that Joseph said, remember when Potiphar's wife wanted him? He doesn't say, "How can I do this and sin against Potiphar?" He says, "How can I do this and sin against the LORD?" You see, that's the issue.

Here's two mindsets. One mindset: God is small. That'll lead you into it. One mindset is, when offending God no longer terrifies you. Another mindset, think with me here: When you think God is against you. You say, "What do you mean?" What I mean is this: As a Christian, especially single, you can come to points in your life where you feel God has forgotten you. You want to be married. You don't like being single. You've asked the Lord for a spouse. And you feel like, you see other people around you getting married, "Lord, what's happened? I want a spouse just as much as they do. You didn't give me the gift of singleness any more than You gave it to them." And you can get to feeling sorry for yourself, and self-pity. And remember, the devil is a slanderer. And will he not come in right there and say, "Look at you. Look at these folks over here. God's given them girlfriend, boyfriend. They're courting. They're doing this. God's got it out for you. You're probably not even one of His. He probably doesn't want anything to do with you. He just mocks you. He's forgotten you. What are you serving Him for? Look at how much everybody else has. And you don't have anything."

And you know what you can do right at that point with that mindset? Justify sin. You can justify it. Listen. Does God say He's against you? Listen to what He says. I'll just fly through these. Romans 8:31, "What shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" Look, just because God hasn't given you a spouse yet, does

not mean that He's against you. Look, all of us have trials to bear. That may be yours today. You can look over at the married guy and you can think, "Look at him. I don't have what he has." No, but he doesn't also have what you have. Until you've walked in somebody else's shoes, don't always think that God is showing favorites. God does show favorites, but to all of His children. They're His favorites. And He's guaranteed us all that we have to go through affliction to get to the end. And just because your affliction isn't like that guy, as in one of the afflictions you have to bear happens to be in the realm of singleness, I guarantee he's bearing them, too. So before you think that you're getting the major raw end of the deal, stand in his shoes first. Because, I guarantee you, there's a whole lot of people that are married that wish they weren't.

Romans 8:32. Now think with me here. "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?" Look, if He has given you His Son, then He is going to give you everything that's for your good, for your best. And He knows what's for your best. He really does. How about this: Romans 8:35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Listen, singleness doesn't separate you from the love of Christ. Jesus was single. God is just keeping you just like Him for a season. Paul was single. He is keeping you like that for a season. Come on, you're no more cursed than they were. Psalm 118:6, "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear." I'll tell you, when your mindset is: "I know the Lord knows all about my situation. And I know He's on my side. And I know He is for me, He's not against me. And I know He gave His Son for me. And if He has, He's going to graciously give me everything that's good and profitable for my life, and it's all going to work out for my good. I love God. I know He hasn't forgotten me. There is a promise there that He will never leave me nor forsake me. I know that."

Psalm 56:9, "This I know, that God is for me." When you have that mindset, brethren, it goes a long way to help deliver you. Matthew 7:11, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" And I'll guarantee you this, He gives good things to His children. And if He looks at you, and He says, "I know, in My infinite wisdom, that the best thing for that person right now is singleness." Listen, I never wanted to get married in my life, until God saved me. And then I wanted to get married, I wanted to have a family. He left me single for three years. That was not an enjoyable three years for me. That was tough. But I know full well this: During those three years, He knew it was best for me to be in that place. And I was able to take that time and invest it in studying the Word of God in a way that I would have never been able to had He given me a wife immediately. I was able for the better part of three years to saturate myself with the Word of God and with prayer. Come home from work everyday and just listen to sermons, and get in the Word, and go out and pray. Day after day after day. And get involved in various ministries, and just absorb my life in that, which I would have never been able to do.

Craig and Rod, the two that I was hanging with tightly at that time, they were married. They had kids. They couldn't do the things that I did. They couldn't study the Scriptures like I could. So the thing is: Remember, when you're in a place of singleness,

God is actually giving you opportunity to do things that that married guy over there can't do. He's giving you opportunity, very possibly, to be more fruitful than that other person may be able to be. Don't despise that. Don't let self-pity ruin it. Give yourself to striving to excel at that point.

How about this, Psalm 84:11, "For the LORD God is a sun and a shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly." No good thing. You walk uprightly, He doesn't withhold it. And if He looks at you and He says, "A good thing is a wife," you're getting it. If He says, "A good thing is singleness," you're getting it. And He is wise.

Or this, Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart." Listen, there's a place to take that, if you know, "I do delight in the Lord. I love the Lord. I'm striving to serve the Lord," go to Him and ask Him. "Lord, would you give me the desire of my heart? I really would like to be married."

How about Matthew 6:17-18? It talks there about fasting: "When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Fast. Seek the Lord diligently. Don't just ask Him flippantly. You want something from Him, show Him you mean it. Fast for it. He says that He gives openly those things that you seek Him for in secret.

Or remember this, Genesis 2:18, "The LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him.'" Listen, take that text to Him. "Lord, you say it's not good for a man to be alone, and I'm alone." I mean, plead with Him. Pray to Him. Proverbs 19:14 says, "A prudent wife is from the LORD." I'll guarantee you this, you get a wife, you get a husband, it's from God. Like He's got everything to do with it.

Look, is that important? That's hugely important. If you're just basically a lost person out in the world, and you go, and all you do is camp in front of the TV all the time, you see these movie stars and all these beautiful people, and you go and look in the mirror, and you're like, "I'm not as handsome. I'm not as beautiful. I'm not as this; I'm not as that. I'm not as suave and debonair as these guys. I don't have any chance to get this." Listen, what are you saying? God is sovereign. I mean, is it like any Christian is in some kind of position where God isn't quite able to give that person a mate? I mean, you're basically coming to a conclusion, "Well, I don't have what other people have." Listen, my Bible says a prudent wife is from the LORD. By the way, a prudent husband would be from the same place. If your desire is to have this, you're delighting in the Lord - it's not good for a man to be alone, which must mean that it must not be very good for women to be alone either. Ask. Expect. If you believe God is against you, it can give place. And I've heard this before. I've heard Christians reason, "Well, I'm not married. And I have these desires. And I need to knock the edge off. I need to do this. God understands." No. Listen, you fall into sexual sin, and you reasoning in it because well, you want to be married, but God just hasn't brought you a wife. You see what that's doing? You're basically blaming God for your sin. "Well, He's not for me. He's not there like with other people." You don't want to get into that mindset.

I'll tell you, another mindset that leads Christians into sin is the mindset that basically makes God's threatenings and warnings of no effect. You know what I mean by that? Where you just basically say as a Christian, "Well, I'm a Christian. I can't lose my salvation. So warnings about hell to sexually immoral, there's no condemnation to me. I'm in Christ." You see what I'm saying? That mindset is deadly. That mindset will land people right in the lap of sexual immorality. Because what you basically do is you come to this conclusion: "I'm saved, and the Bible teaches that saved people can't lose their salvation. Therefore no amount of sexual immorality can make me lose my salvation. Therefore the warnings about sexually immoral people suffering under the wrath of God, and not inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven, can't apply to me."

But what presupposition in all that was dead faulty? That first assumption that "I'm saved, and that I can go and jump into all this sexual immorality, and it'll be okay." Listen, this is why Paul is saying, he's like shaking people, "No! No! No! No! Don't think that way. Because if you get involved in sexual immorality, let me tell you, do not be deceived. The sexually immoral do not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven." In other words, it doesn't matter what you think. It doesn't matter what you say about your Christianity. It doesn't matter what assurance you have. It doesn't matter what experience you have. It doesn't matter how long you think you were saved. If you can all of a sudden depart from that, and go into that sexual immorality, and you can just blow off the warnings of Scripture; people like that, Paul comes along and says, "Their condemnation is just."

People who give place to licentiousness and sin, because they basically presume upon God. Brethren, dangerous, dangerous, dangerous. Jesus says if you're not amputating these things, you have an eye that looks at a woman, He says, "You better pluck that thing out or you're going to hell." You say, "He says that?" You better believe He says that. If you have such a theology that you're able to toy with sexual immorality, and convince yourself that no matter how much you do that it's going to be okay, because there's no condemnation, after all you're saved; you're walking on very scary ground. Very scary. Be very careful. That kind of mindset will land people in trouble. And then, I can tell you this, especially guys, girls too but especially guys: A mindset that what I look at doesn't matter. Listen, the apostle Paul gave a stern warning to the Romans. He said, "Make no provision for the flesh." The flesh is that unredeemed part of us. We're to crucify it. We're to take the life out of it. We're to buffet it and beat it. We're to starve it. The flesh is like a living animal. It's like an animal that has the ability, if it's fed, to regain strength. It's almost like a creature that you can crucify life out of it, so that it becomes weaker and weaker. But then, you can also feed it so that, like an animal, it suddenly becomes incredibly strong and vicious. Job said, Job 31:1, he made a covenant with his eyes not to look (or "Why then shall I look"). He would not look. He made a covenant with his eyes.

Guys, you drive around this city, you know where the billboards are. Don't look at them. You know if you walk into a mall, and you walk by Victoria's Secret; for one, don't go there; two, don't even go to the malls. What do you need there? Guys, what do

you need at a mall? Buy it online. I'm serious. There is practically no reason that any guy needs to go into a mall.

(From the room) Walmart.

Tim: Right. Walmart. And even there, watch yourself at the racks. H-E-B, watch yourself at the racks. You know it, don't look. Keep your eyes to the ground. I mean, I go to the gym. To the Y. Ruby and I go there. I mean, there are women working out. There's obvious places not to look. Watch your eyes. Believe me, your eyes are a channel to feed the flesh. And if you feed that animal, you're going to go down. You feed it enough, and it's going to take you by the throat, and you're going to go down. And I'll tell you, you tempt God, and He's going to draw His hand back. And you may fall farther than you ever thought you were going to fall. And if He takes His hand back; when a Christian presumes upon God, be very careful. Listen, movies, TV, computer, you need to stay away from places. There are places you know you should not go. Don't go there. Don't feed it. Guys, there is no reason and no legitimate excuse for you to be in circumstances that are putting things before your eyes that are inappropriate. Don't tell me, "Well, I have to. Well, I need to do this thing over here, and this just happens." Or, "This is part and parcel of that." That's not true. The Scripture says, "Flee fornication. Run from it." You need to get away from it. Don't entice it. What we look at matters.

Another mindset, it's when we forget, (this is huge,) when we forget that a vacuum never works. In other words, if I'm struggling with sexual thoughts, illicit ones, or I had dreams that weren't right, or something just got stuck in my face. Brother Andy says over there in China, you know, he's on his computer, and all of a sudden, it just appears, full pornography right in his face. He didn't look for it, he didn't ask for it, he didn't entice it, just bang! It's right there. I mean, once in a while something happens where you have images, you have images in your mind from when you were lost. But listen, one of the things that often happens is - I can remember one time when I was working as an engineer, my boss was in there, and there was this guy that worked over in the other cubicle across from me. And this guy would come late. He wasn't a really good worker, and he would miss a lot of work because he was having these cluster headaches and everything. And the guy drank all sorts of coffee and smoked like crazy. Every break he was going out to smoke. And I came in one day, and I said, "Scott, I saw, down in the lunchroom, they had a medical fact sheet on cluster headaches." And I said, "They're caused by excessive caffeine and nicotine." This guy would have to get this machine on him that would shock him, while he was at work. And Scott would be over there looking at my boss, and all of a sudden he'll just jump, because he'd get this great big shock. And I could tell it really made Scott mad. So I came back from the lunchroom that day, and Scott is in his office. I said, "Hey Scott, I saw this thing about cluster headaches down there." And he's just going, "La la la la la la." Like he didn't want to hear.

Can I tell you something? That does not work with sexual sin. You just put your hands over your ears, that kind of thing where, "No! I don't want to think about it." Listen, in 2 Timothy 2:22, "Flee youthful passions." But that's not all. You see, that's the negative. That's what you want to clear out; you want to get away from. But if that's all

it was, it wouldn't be Christianity. It would just be some kind of morality. It would be some kind of stop doing the bad. But with Christianity, it's always what? There's always an opposite side to it. It's always "Christ came, not only to deliver His people from the evil, He came to make them zealous of good works. We replace one thing with another. We have to replace the bad with the good. And what does it say there? 2 Timothy 2:22, "Flee youthful passions, and pursue" - you run from one thing, and you chase after another. What is it? What do we pursue? "Faith, love, peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." You know what? Start loving people. Start doing things that are going to increase your faith. Start thinking about ways you can give more and see how faithful God is. Start thinking about missionaries you can put together a care package for, and show love. Start thinking about people that you can serve. Get involved in things. I'll tell you, when you're not sitting alone in front of your computer, but you're rather out helping somebody, serving somebody, it's a whole lot different. You're not likely going to look at pornography when you're out mowing the widow's lawn in your church. It's just the reality.

Brethren, another mindset is when we forget the power of prayer. And what I mean by that is, look, when you start your day and you really believe that there is power in prayer, and that God can deliver from temptation, you pray it. Just like Jesus taught us - "Keep us from temptation. Deliver us from evil." You'll pray that way because you believe, "I really believe God can keep me from this. Lord, keep me from it. I'm going to school, Lord, help me, help me. Give me the ability to keep my eyes focused." I mean, you're surrounded by 50% of these maidens that Job wouldn't look at. And there you are, out in the campus; and they're walking around, and summer is coming on, and they're wearing things they should not be wearing. And sometimes you're in class, and it's just right there in your face. "God help us," you can pray, brethren. You can pray. If we're to be salt and light in the midst of this world, just the reality is we're going to be around things that are improper. And we need God's help and grace and mercy to be able to cope with these things. Remember, there is power in prayer. He would not have taught us, Luke 22:40, Jesus says, "When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." That's because we can pray and God will keep us from temptation.

How about this: When you believe you are justified in relieving your affliction through sin. Now what do I mean by that one? I mean, your sexual appetite is just screaming. That's affliction. Let's call it what it is. When a man or a woman has sexual desires that are incredibly strong, and there is no immediate, viable, righteous outlet for that desire, that's tough. That's hard. That's a trial. That's affliction. But brethren, when you have a mindset that you're justified in avoiding affliction by way of sin, when you have that mindset, you've got the groundwork for a fall. You see, God says, 1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful." Listen right there, God is faithful. When you feel like you're at that point where you're ready to break, the best thing to do is clear out, hit the closet, and go to your knees: "Lord, I need help. Lord, I don't know if I can keep going. I need help." "He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability." He promises there will be sufficient

grace for you to get through this thing without taking the outlet of sin. "But with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

Or 2 Peter 2:9, "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials." He knows. He knows how to rescue you. You need to believe that. You see, a lot of times when you're in the midst of it, you think you've got to deal with it. You think you've got to give yourself a way out. It says, "God knows how to give you a way out." Run to Him. Believe that. When it's fierce, the battle is hot, believe it. Believe it, brethren, believe it. He is able to rescue the godly from trials. He knows how to rescue you. He knows. Brethren, so often with the Lord: you don't have because what? You haven't asked. Listen, if you've got that mindset, "The Lord knows how to deliver me from this," you run to Him, "Lord, deliver me. Show me a way out."

Or how about this: You do fall into sexual sin. Can I tell you what? Listen, you not only have these passions, you have the devil. He comes along, and he's whispering to you, "Certainly God is going to understand. Certainly he doesn't expect you to endure this. Look at the affliction you're in. He's forgotten you. He doesn't care about you." He's going to come along and slander God to you. And then, you fall into the sin.

And then, he suddenly changes his tone. Now he slanders you to you. Before he slandered God to you. Now you fall, "Look at you. Look at how pathetic you are. Are you going to think, even think, Christ wants anything to do with you after what you just did? You might as well just go do it again. You're so defiled. You're so wretched. Just go do it again. I mean, why even fight anymore? You've already fallen, look how pathetic you are. You might as well just blow it even worse." You get that mindset, just the devil trying to convince you, "It's no use now, you might as well just indulge."

Brethren, this is where Scripture comes along and it says things like this, think there with Romans 8: "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?" You remember who you are. Listen, even on your worst day, there is no condemnation. Even on your worst day, who shall bring any charge? That doesn't mean that nobody brings charges. When it says, "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?" it doesn't mean that there aren't those who do bring charges. It means there's nobody that can bring one that sticks.

I'll tell you this, as a young Christian I would fall into all sorts of sins. The battle was on. I mean, for the first time in my life, I wanted righteousness. I hungered for it. I mean, it was all out battle. There was no perfect day. But I can tell you, even on my worst day, I was so overwhelmed by the fact that Jesus Christ came and rescued me when I was totally dead in my trespasses. Now that I'm justified, and I happen to have one fall; I mean, when He came and rescued me when I was like that, is He going to now abandon me when I'm like this? I mean, how much more now that I'm His, and now that I'm justified, how much more is He going to come and be a help to me? When the devil would come in at those times and says, "He doesn't want anything to do with you." I would say, "Well, that's interesting. When I was like ten thousand times worse before I was regenerated, He wanted everything to do with me." I mean, the basic logic of it was foolish. I'd say, "Devil, your logic is not working with me." Who can lay anything to the charge against God's elect? It's God Who justifies! (Amen). I mean,

look, "Oh, is that right, devil? I'm pretty bad? Yeah. That's right. You're right, I did sin, and I am bad. But I read somewhere in my Bible that I have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. I don't think I'm going to buy into that thinking."

Or how about this? Brethren, you've got the reality of the fear of the Lord, like we talked about. When offending God no longer terrifies us. But how about just this: How about just from the love end? From the closeness end? From the intimacy end? When we forget just how much this kind of thing damages communion with the Lord.

Listen, can I tell you this, David sinned with Bathsheba. Nine months later, the child was born. And that child died. So most people estimate that David was unrepentant of the sexual immorality for somewhere in the neighborhood of nine months approximately. It's a good guess. We know it was within the time frame of this child being born. And so this judgment is basically handed down that the child is going to die. She gave birth. It seems in the flow of 2 Samuel that it happened fairly immediately. There's not record of other things happening there. So it may very well be right that about nine months went by.

Listen, to those of you that have found Christ precious, and you love intimacy with Him, David lost those nine months. What do I mean by that? I mean nine months that he did not grow in communion with the Lord. Nine months where he did not grow in intimacy with [the Lord]. They were wasted. You say, "How do you know?" Because he tells us. Listen to this. In Psalm 51, where he's responding after the sin with Bathsheba, "Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice." He describes that period of unrepentance as having broken bones. In Psalm 32:3, "When I kept silent - in other words, sinned, haven't confessed it, haven't come to the Lord - when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long." Mark 4:19, "The desires of other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful." You know what happens when you have desires for other things, like for a woman, or for a man, and you become consumed with those in an illegitimate way? They choke. They choke the Word. They choke communion with God. They cause the bones to break. They cause this kind of bones wasting away, groaning. Look, if you don't value intimacy with Christ, just run out into a bunch of sexual sin; just view pornography. If you think you're going to have some of the sweetest times that you've ever experienced in prayer after you do that, you're crazy. It's not going to happen. Can I tell you who takes flight up to the mountain of God? Anybody know your Bibles? Anybody know Psalm 15 or Psalm 24? Who is it? He that has clean hands and a pure heart. You spend your time defiling yourself, you will not walk in those high places with the Lord. You will not be given access. I'm talking experientially. I'm talking manifestly experiencing the reality of God's presence; knowing what it is to walk with Him and talk with Him and delight in Him. You will groan, and your bones will break, before He'll let you mount that holy mountain. You won't go there. You won't walk there.

And one last one: When you forget, brethren, when you forget the agonies of Christ for sexual sin. Listen guys, you ever tempted by the computer? As you're thinking about it, begin to picture in your mind. I read somewhere in my Bible something like this: Titus 2:13, "Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave

Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession." To purify. To take that smut, and that dirt, out of your life. Scripture says, "He gave Himself." Listen, can you see Christ hanging there? Darkness is upon the land. Everyone has forsaken Him. God has forsaken Him. The sun has forsaken Him. It's dark. Can you imagine the groans and the sighs of the Man of sorrows as He hangs upon that cross, specifically to purify you? What are you gonna do? You're gonna tread on that blood? You're gonna tread on that pain? You're gonna tread on that affliction? You're gonna say, "Well, it doesn't really matter. It's a small thing. It's a light thing I'm about to do. I'm gonna just cheaply sin, because Christ has paid for it?" You're just gonna trample that blood? You can imagine in your mind Christ hanging there between Heaven and Earth, groaning? You see, when the Christian ventures into the realm of sexual sin, his or her thinking has totally gone wrong. Totally gone wrong. This is where our minds need to be. You know, it's hard when you think, you're walking along, It's a disregard. It's a despising. Just remember this: "You despised Me." Remember God saying that through Nathan to David? "You despised Me. You disregarded Me," so says 1 Thessalonians 4. "You disregarded Me. You despised Me. You despised My Word. You have utterly scorned the LORD." Is that what you want to do, Christian? You that love the Lord, do you want to scorn the Lord? Do you want to trample the blood of Christ? He who hung on the cross to make you pure, do you want to do that? Do you want to just wreck your communion with the Lord? Brethren, these are things we need to think about. It's a mind battle. It's bringing your thoughts in subjection to the Word. Arm yourself. Think on these things. Well, there you have it for tonight.

(From the room) You just made a reference to 1 Peter, where you said, "Those of you who count Him as precious." Is it possible to be saved and not count Him as precious?

Tim: No. Now, obviously, our affection for Him can increase and diminish. But I would just say this: The given New Covenant promise, just huge, is that He is going to put His Spirit within us. The Spirit comes and works the fruit of the Spirit in His people. The first description of that fruit is love. The highest love is for God. For Christ. The Spirit of God works that in His people. I mean, you get the reality of the parable that I brought up last week of the treasure hidden in the field. I mean, basically, the reality of Christianity is discovering a treasure that is so precious to us, we're willing to go sell everything to have it. Now, that doesn't mean that as we progress through our Christian life, that from time to time, idols don't encroach and challenge that. But Jesus says that He disciplines, He chastens those whom He loves. The promise in the New Covenant is this: That He is going to cleanse us from our idols. In other words, He is jealous for our love, for our affection. And when anything enters in that challenges it, He's knocking it out of there. I mean, He is jealous for our love, and He's determined to have it. And His Spirit is working that within us. So, I would say it can ebb and it can flow. The very characteristic of a Christian given in Romans 8:28, is not only those that are called, but those that love God. I mean, that is a description of the Christian. So no, that's impossible. You come across somebody that doesn't find Christ precious, you've

just come across an unbeliever. Now they may believe a lot of things about Christ, but they're not a true believer. I mean, that's just the reality. That's one thing that, to the saved person, Christ is precious. I mean, if anything is true about the Christian, Christ is altogether everything; altogether lovely, altogether worthy of being followed, of our total commitment. One of the triggers that really spirals the Christian downward is when their prayer life takes a hit. And, I've heard other men say this, and I feel it myself, that even more so than maybe not reading as much of the Word. But when the prayer life slackens, even more so than Bible reading, your spiritual life takes a major hit. And I have found that to be true.