

Holy Spirit: Your Best Friend to Kill Sexual Sin

Tim Conway | *illbehonest.com*

Tim: Ok, well, last week I had hoped that we would deal with the unpardonable sin, and then with sexual sin. And we didn't get to the second part last week. And so, that's what I want to deal with tonight. And I think I want to call it something like: The Holy Spirit is your best Friend in fighting against sexual temptation. Something like that. The Holy Spirit is your best Friend when it comes to fighting sexual immorality. So, I thought the first thing that I wanted to do is develop what I want to call a theology of sexual sin. Call it the doctrine of sexual sin.

Here's a starting point. Nobody in this room; nobody in this world is stronger than sin. None of us are. And by the title, the Holy Spirit is our best Friend when it comes to sexual sin. Nobody is strong enough to overcome sexual temptation on their own. Nobody is strong enough to overcome sexual immorality on their own. Period. It's an impossibility. It is stronger than us. Lay it down. It is stronger. When you think about the lost man, total inability - absolutely total inability to do this. And I'm including here "lost Christians." You say what's that? That's a paradox. I'm talking about there's a reason why certain people in the church never get victory. That's what I'm talking about. And lost people cannot get victory.

Now, listen. Think with me here. Oftentimes in Scripture, Scripture doesn't deal necessarily with sins particularly; sins specifically, like certain types of sexual sin. There's places it does, but oftentimes what we get in Scripture is we get sin personified. Where am I going with all this? I'm going here with it. Paul talks about sin - singular as a force, as a power. Remember how God spoke to Cain way back in Genesis 4? What did He say? Anybody remember what He said to Cain before Cain killed his brother? Sin is crouching at the door. What is that? See what He did? He personified sin. He made it into something living. It's crouching at the door. Almost as though it's separate. It's like over there at the door. It's crouching. That's like an animal ready to pounce.

Who else speaks that way about sin? Personifies it like that? How about Paul? How about Paul in Romans? Think about what Paul says in Romans. He says sin - concerning Christians - he says sin singular is not going to have dominion over you as a Christian. He talks about sin singular seeking to reign in our mortal bodies. You are not to let sin reign. Not sins, as in these particular things. You are not to let sin as a force, as a dominating power in your life rule over you. Here's the thing with lost people. Lost people are dominated by sin. Sin dominates them. Who is not dominated by sin? Those who are under grace, not under law. Who are people who are under law? What is that another expression for? What people in the world are under the law? Lost people. If you're under grace, sin will not have dominion over you. If you're under law, sin will what? Have dominion over you. Exactly. Sin will reign in your mortal body. Sin does dominate. How about where we've been looking in Ephesians 2? A lost man is dead in

trespasses and sins. Now, there it is in the plural. But my point is this: The lost man is dominated by sin personified. This dark lord, this dark power of sin reigns - that's the position of a king. Sin takes up the seat in the lost man and it sits on the throne. A lot of people have this idea, you know, they talk about "we" sitting on the throne, or Christ sitting on the throne. Don't ever believe that. Sin is what sits on the throne of the lost man. Sin does. And man is a slave. And that's exactly how Scripture makes him out. Dead in sin. He is a slave to sin. He is dominated by sin. Sin does reign in his mortal body.

Now, here's the thing. You know as well as I do that not every person in the world is dominated by sexual immorality evenly or the same as everybody else. You know that's true. Not every husband who's lost has committed adultery on his wife. Not everybody in the world is a homosexual. Not everybody has committed fornication in their life - the actual act of it.

Sin as a dominating force, it manifests itself different ways in different people. Rules them. Dominates them. Reigns over them. But it shows up differently in different people. But here's the thing, when you look at Scripture, sexual immorality is oftentimes at the front of the list. Not just once, and not just twice, and not just three times - in fact, it's the rarity, it's the exception when you have a list of sins and it's not at the beginning. You ever notice that? In fact, isn't it interesting that when God gives a people over, what does He give them over to?

What's the progress of God giving a people up? It's that they begin to do dishonorable things. It's in Romans 1. They consider themselves wise. They're really fools. They begin to fall down and worship other things besides God. They're seeking to suppress the knowledge of God all the time. And God gives them over. And when He begins to give a people over, you'll notice the progression there. It's not immediately into homosexuality. The first step is people begin to do that which they shouldn't do. The first step in that being given over by God, sexual perversion. And what I mean by that is everything outside of marriage. It begins to rot away at that level.

Now think about the lists where sexual sin is first. Somebody look up 1 Corinthians 6. 1 Corinthians 6:9 And here you have a list - don't be deceived. People who practice unrighteousness don't inherit the kingdom of God. And what's right at the beginning of the list?

(from the room) The sexually immoral.

Tim: What's next?

(from the room) Idolaters.

Tim: What's next?

(from the room) Adulterers.

Tim: What's next?

(from the room) Men who practice homosexuality.

Tim: I mean, isn't that interesting? The very first one is sexual immorality. Three out of the first four: sexual immorality.

Where else can you think of? I think of the works of the flesh. Galatians 5. Somebody go over there. What is it? V. 22? 23? Those are the fruits of the Spirit. Wait, say it again? Sexual immorality - first, impurity - second, sensuality - third, and then idolatry. See, three out of the first four right there. Or how about in Ephesians 5, you get because of these things, the wrath of God is coming. What's the "these things?" What is it? V. 7 maybe? "Everyone who is sexually immoral or impure or who is covetous, that is, an idolater." Notice what the first two are.

Think about Paul speaking to the Thessalonians, and he's talking about God desiring their sanctification. And what's the very first thing he goes into? Chapter 4. 1 Thessalonians. "This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality..." Isn't it interesting. The first thing he brings up there is sanctification. Where's the first place he goes? Sexual purity.

And this is often at the front of the list. And here's the thing, I think if we're honest, we recognize different people - lost people fall prey to sin in all sorts of ways. Sin rules and sin reigns them. But one of the stark, first in line manner in which they fall and in which they give themselves over to is this sensuality and sexual immorality. And it's a big one. You know, all you have to do is look around in our society to see we're in a pornographic society. You look historically at the sins that have been struggled with through history. This was big 2,000 years ago. It was right at the forefront. It was a problem, and it made it to the head of the class in these lists of sins that were given. And the thing is, men who are dominated by sin - sin may manifest itself differently in different people. And it may manifest itself differently at different times in the life of the same people. You say, well, that guy was committing adultery and then he quit. Well, you know what? People will change and they will migrate in the way they're dominated by sin. They will do that. And idolatry can make a man do that. Have a man fall into adultery, and he's going to lose his wife. He idolizes her and he will give up that sin - perhaps even for good. He can do that. Men can give up alcohol because they idolize their own life and the alcohol about killed them and they'll give it up. They'll exchange it for something else. That's how lost man is, but nevertheless, completely dominated.

And my point is this: As long as sexual urge, as long as that body is throwing urges, that mind is throwing urges, Satan is throwing urges, as long as sin which seeks to rule in them is throwing that kind of lust their way, they're helpless. They cannot dominate that. They cannot have victory over that. Now, like I say, they may get old and the sexual urge and the sexual temptation kind of goes out of them because they're getting old. Or, they may idolize a wife and they may change one thing for another for a season perhaps. I mean, that kind of thing happens. But we're talking men who are dominated and ruled by this.

But now, you come over into the category of Christian. And I'm going to say this, the Christian is just as dead in the water and just as helpless by himself and in his own power. Jesus said - Jesus was coming at the positive end, and He was speaking of good works, but did He not say in John 15, "without Me..." what? "You can do nothing." And obviously, Jesus works in His people by way of the Spirit of God. I mean, we don't want to make - the Spirit of Christ - it's interesting even in Romans 8 how you kind of move from the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, Christ... There's this transition kind of happens. It's one and the same. You don't want to separate these two things.

But what's the classic text in our New Testament that shows that the Christian puts to death sin only by the Spirit of God? Romans 8:13 Somebody read that. "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." See, one path is death? That's the lost man. One path is life. That's the saved man. The path of life is a person putting to death deeds of the body, not by themselves and not in their own power. They're doing that in the power of the Spirit. You see that.

And so this is where I'm going in all of this. The Holy Spirit is absolutely essential. If we want to have a good - I mean you want to get to the root; you want to go deep in this issue of doing battle, of having victory, of overcoming, of being successful battling urges and temptations with pornography, battling urges and temptations in the direction of sexual immorality.

And you know, having a ministry like I'll Be Honest, and for one, being able to watch, like I was telling you last week, which videos get the most traffic on YouTube and on I'll Be Honest, being able to see that - there's no question about it. Two of the top most watched videos have to do with the unpardonable sin and have to do with sexual immorality. That tells me that among professing Christians, it's huge, it's big, it's something that people are struggling with. They're looking for answers. They're looking for help. People are getting on the Internet and at times instead of falling prey to pornography, they're actually searching in such ways that they end up finding I'll Be Honest. They end up finding, even one of the first videos after James came and we kind of connected the two ministries together, maybe even made it before that, but that James made on this subject, I mean, look at the amount of traffic on it. You look at the amount of traffic on stuff that James has put up there or that John Piper has done or that Paul Washer has done or any of the pastors that are popular out there today, these things are getting so much traffic. Some of them hundreds and hundreds of thousands of hits. Why? What that tells me is you have people who are professing Christians - whether they're true or not, you know they're in both categories; undoubtedly in both categories. But they're searching and they're looking for answers.

And I can give this answer right here. You cannot have victory unless it is victory that is had by way of the Spirit of God. It is by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body. In other words, this is what we really have to key in on. You and I don't have the power - lost or saved -

by ourselves. We don't have the power. You need the power of Another to overcome in this area of your life. You need the power of the Holy Spirit.

And what I want to do in this Bible study is simply talk about that. (incomplete thought) Where is the Spirit? And where is His power? You say, well, as a Christian - if you're a Christian; if you're a genuine Christian, doesn't Romans 8 say that you have the Spirit? Yep. And if you don't have the Spirit, what? You're none of His. You don't belong to Him. So, every single child of God has the Spirit. What is that? Case closed? Does every true Christian have victory all the time? Is it enough to be a Christian to win the battle? Now, somebody might say, well, I read in Scripture that if you're a Christian, you will win the battle. If you're a Christian, you will cut off that hand and pluck out that eye, or else you're going to go to hell. And look, those are the indicatives, I recognize, but we've got imperatives in our New Testament too. In other words, we've got commandments to not let sin reign in our mortal bodies. There is a place that by the Spirit we are killing sin; we are seeking to put that sin to death. There is a place. Anybody think about Colossians 3 - what it says there concerning sexual immorality? Which by the way is at the front of the list again. "Put to death what is earthly in you." What's the first in line? I just said: sexual immorality. First in line again. But put it to death. But here's the thing, you by yourself - just like Jesus said to His disciples: "Without Me you can do nothing." Without that Spirit, you cannot do this.

Now, why does Scripture tell us to put this to death? Because you have to. Why does Jesus call us to cut off the hand and pluck out the eye? Because you have to. You have to strive. There is an effort. You have to work out your own salvation. But brethren, the way we do this is in the power of Another. And that is so key. You will do this only as you do this by divine power.

And so I think the thing that we have to talk about; the thing that we have to wrestle with is it's not just a given that because you're a Christian and you possess the Spirit, therefore sit back, recline, kick your feet up, it's all going to happen. The Spirit of God is going to make it happen.

There's some keys. There are things said in Scripture about the Spirit and His interaction with us that I think we need to think about. Like, as a Christian, how do I live in the power of the Spirit? As a Christian, how do I not live in the power of the Spirit? What's the difference? I mean, here's the thing. Some Christians are more mature than other Christians. Some Christians are more holy than other Christians. Look, there's automatic assumptions in Scripture that when you come to look at elders, not everybody in the church is an elder. When you come to look at teachers, James is very specific that not many of you should be teachers. He is automatically assuming right up front that most people in the church are not at a certain level. You get people all over the place. Why does Paul have to tell the Corinthians not to sleep with prostitutes? Because they were. There are others who weren't. They are many in our church who don't do that. Paul wasn't doing that.

Let me ask you this. Here's the reality. Some are having victory - some true Christians are having victory in the area of sexual immorality while others are not having the same amount of

success. And here's the thing, the guy that's having the success - "without Me you can do nothing." Same truth applies there. It's not like he's got a power innate to himself. That man is doing what he does in reaching a higher plane and excelling to a greater degree by the power of the Spirit. The one who isn't, isn't tapping the power of the Spirit. Or let's say it this way, that's almost impersonal to say it like that. It's like tapping a maple tree for maple syrup or something. The Person of the Spirit - you need to get this - the weak person who's fumbling and tumbling and tripping and falling - the Spirit of God in his life - that Spirit; that third Person of the Godhead, is the same Person in the life of the guy who's walking a very holy life. The Spirit in the weak man's life is just as powerful over sexual sin as the Spirit in the holy man's life. Look, what's true about the weak man is that the Spirit is not subduing that sexual temptation in the same way as it's happening in the strong man.

Why? That's the question on the table. Why? The weak Christian is indwelt by the almighty Spirit of God. Listen, the Spirit of God is stronger than sin every time, every day, always, in every instance, no exceptions. The Spirit is more powerful than sin all the time. There is no sexual sin that is stronger than the Spirit of God.

So why the difference? The weak Christian, if he ever puts to death deeds of the flesh, does it by the Spirit. If the strong man puts to death the deeds of the flesh more, it's by the Spirit. Same Spirit. Same power. The Spirit is a Person. The Spirit chooses what He will do, how He will do it, when He will do it. What's happening in the weak man's life?

You see, this is what we need to get at. The Spirit is your best Friend in putting to death sexual sin. That's the title. That's the title of this. The Spirit of God is your best Friend in putting to death sexual sin.

So what's the difference? I mean, from your knowledge of Scripture, does anything jump out at you as to why that difference might exist? What was that? Quenching the Spirit. Tim: Oh, brethren...

Yeah. Let's go there. We are told by the same author in two different places not to grieve the Spirit, not to quench the Spirit. You know what's interesting about both of those passages? Paul doesn't explain what he means.

What do you think is true when an author of Scripture doesn't explain himself? What do you think is a typical assumption in the mind of the author when he says something like that? That the hearers already knew what he meant. Tim: Yeah. Exactly. That it would be simply understood. He doesn't have to get into developing this. Look, we all know, Paul was one to develop an idea when it needed to be developed. He didn't do that in either of those cases. He's really making the assumption: we know what does it.

Let me offer a suggestion here. When we are given instruction; when we're told to do something, you know that Jesus did all that He did as a man - He did it in the power of the Spirit

of God. The Spirit of God enabled Him to cast out demons. The Spirit of God moved Him, empowered Him, drove Him out into the wilderness to be tempted. The Spirit of God filled Christ without measure. When Jesus came along and He healed, you think about this. Go over there, find that pool, and wash. Or He would just say rise up. The Spirit was working through Jesus Christ to powerfully heal these people. But you know what's interesting? These people by faith did what was absolutely impossible for them to do in their own power. Get that. It's just as impossible for you to overcome sexual temptation as it is for a man to go wash in a pool and get his sight, or to simply get up just because Jesus told him to get up. How does a man who's got palsy and is lame get up? How does a man who's been for almost 40 years beside this pool - how does he just get up? Jesus told him to get up and he did. Here's the thing. Here's the thing.

One of the ways you grieve the Spirit; one of the ways that you forsake the power of the Spirit is when you don't strive to do what He tells you to do. That is so key to living the Christian life. It doesn't mean that you have the power to do it, any more than that man on the ground had power to get up in his own strength. But you see, what happened when Jesus told him to do it, and looking up at Jesus and believing, he got up. He did it. He did the impossible. Not in his own strength. You see, that is the secret to living the Christian life. Not so much a secret, but it's amazing how often we miss it.

Brethren, when Scripture says to do things, if your first attitude is one of defeat, if your first attitude is "I can't do that," no, no, no. Of course, you can't do that. The first step is Jesus tells me to pluck out my eye. He tells me to do that. His representative - he talks about putting to death sin in the mortal body. He talks about not letting sin reign. He talks about putting to death what's earthly in me. I am being told in Scripture to kill it. Now here's what you'll find. When you say "I can't." It rules me. It dominates me. I can't. You see what's happening right there? What you have to lay hold on is this: The Spirit of God empowers us in our obedience. When you are disobedient, He doesn't. If you think I'm going to lay down and not obey Christ, and the Spirit of God is going to come in and wonderfully saturate with His power and I'm going to rise up and I'm going to be so strong and I'm going to be able to resist every temptation. That's not how it happens. That isn't obedience.

Or how about this, as far as the commands go with this, you are told to flee youthful lusts. You are told to run from them. You're told to run and you're told to attack. Cut. Amputate. You're called to do some surgery here. You're called to eradicate things. You're called to flee from things. You're called to do battle. You're called to put to death. You're called to kill. And look, when we look at our Lord and we say, "Lord, I trust You. That if You've told us in Your Word to do this. I'm going to trust that there's power in this to do it." And even if you fall on your face, you know what? You get up again. "Lord, I just fell on my face." Maybe it was because you were too proud. Maybe it was because He wants to teach you all the more how badly you need Him. But brethren, I'm telling you this, the Holy Spirit is your best Friend in putting to death sexual sin. You've got to have the Spirit. You've got to have Him.

Let's talk about grieving the Spirit. Just not striving to do what you're commanded to do is one of the ways, but how else? Brethren, the man who lives the most holy life - what is a holy life? Closely associated with those sanctified word group. We're sanctified - is it 2 Thessalonians 2:13? Sanctified by the Spirit. You're sanctified by the Spirit. The holy man is holy by the power of the Spirit. That man by that Spirit - that Spirit is operating in his life. He's putting to death. That man is doing the things - he's seeking to obey; he's seeking to walk in the way (incomplete thought). He's mindful. He's mindful to make a covenant with his eyes like Job and not look where he shouldn't look. He's mindful to flee, to run away from places that would cause him to stumble. He's mindful of that. He does that. Running. Gouging out. Amputating.

Look, every one of us, that means you have to make some radical steps. If you're not willing to make radical steps, and then you go around all the time dismally defeated - Oh, woe is me... I just can't overcome. I'm just not like other people. Woe is me. Like what's that donkey on Winnie the Pooh? Eeyore. Brethren, we have to take radical steps.

But what are other ways that we grieve - and you have to put those two: quench, quench - you just quench. He's this burning, He's this fire. There's this heat. There's this passion that He encourages in our love for God, our love for Christ, in living a holy life, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And you just throw a big bucket of cold water on His influences in your life. How? He doesn't explain it. He expects that you full well know. What? Look. Be honest with me. What are the things that at times you've allowed into your life and you know you shouldn't have? Or things you haven't allowed into your life that you know you should have? What are the things that you've done? When are the times your conscience told you you've grieved the Spirit? What are the things?

James: One thing I was thinking of is when you don't approve what is excellent, what's amazing is in Philippians 1 when Paul says approve what is excellent, so you may be pure. Meaning, if I don't approve what is excellent, that deals with purity and blamelessness, and so I know there's times I grieve the Holy Spirit not by even doing overt sin, but by not approving what is most excellent; just doing what is good, and right there I grieve the Holy Spirit. And I start myself on a path where I can end up in sin or greater sin.

Tim: And here's the thing to think about. It's like James is saying right there. What can happen is like I speak in a rough tone to my wife. Two things just happened. I made provision for the flesh. Anybody think of a text that says not to do that? Romans 13:14 I just made provision for the flesh. And I just grieved the Spirit, to whatever degree. Not everything we do grieves the Spirit to the same degree undoubtedly. And undoubtedly, if we deal with sin quickly, things get healed very well. But think about what happens. Something in my relationship with my wife and then all of a sudden, bombarded by a temptation in the sexual realm. Can there be connections like that?

The Spirit of God spoke to me. I should not have had a second helping of that food. I knew it not only was going to appear to others to be gluttony around me; I just knew I didn't need it. I knew I

shouldn't have done that. You see, you make a provision for the flesh. You grieve the Spirit. And then what happens? Sin will now get the upper hand. Sin as a singular, as a force.

And so what happens is you can suddenly find yourself very vulnerable with regards to sexual sin when the thing that you did wasn't even about that. You didn't grieve the Spirit through pornography. You didn't grieve the Spirit through anything that you were doing like that. But it's because you grieved Him and now His power in your life has subsided. It's waned. And suddenly, a wave comes over you and you are under such temptation, or, what's happened is, you've tempted the devil. And when the Spirit steps back, He gives place to the devil to do something or to tempt you.

Listen, the Spirit is not only more powerful than sin; He's more powerful than the devil. Infinitely more! He can stop all these things. But there's connections. You see, there's connections with you feeding the flesh. There's connections with defiling your conscience. That Spirit of God knows when you defile the conscience. You should never do it. And it will grieve Him.

Anybody think of other things that tend to grieve the Spirit?

(from the room) Well, I know the verse that says to not grieve the Spirit Ephesians 4:30, the next verse says let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor be put away from you. I definitely think bitterness, or having harsh affections towards another brother will grieve the Spirit really quick.

Tim: Brethren, we need to remember this, the Spirit is always stronger than sexual sin. Always. And if you're feeling like you're just being thrown around, you have to be honest. If you're lost, you can grit your teeth, and you can try in your own strength to do things, but you're going to be defeated every time. You're just going to be defeated. You're going to be defeated.

But if you're a Christian and you've got the Spirit, you're going to put that to death. And you will do it. You will do it. It's a given. Jesus says that you must do it, or you will go to hell. That's as much as saying you will do it.

Listen, everybody who belongs to Christ, there is a reality. They have crucified the passions, the lusts. They have. Scripture says that. Scripture says sin will not have dominion over you. Scripture says the path to life - putting to death the deeds of the body. These are at the front of the line. You will do this if you're on the path to life. You will. Because you do have the Spirit. And because the Spirit will make you holy. And because if you spend your time grieving the Spirit, you're going to spend time back in the woodshed too. And He's going to see to it. I mean, we have this. We have this reality. He disciplines His children; if you're His child.

But brethren, there are those who don't make near as much progress in the Christian life. There are those who flounder. There are those who are more Corinthian-like too many times in their life. There are those who don't get the victory. There are those undoubtedly in the Christian

realm who grieve the Spirit, quench the Spirit more than other people. We don't want to quench the Spirit. We want to live in the power of the Spirit.

Look, the Spirit is a Person. He's infinitely strong. He's with the child of God. Every child of God in this room has the Spirit of God indwelling. The Spirit of God is with you. He is with you and He will be with you apparently forever. You have this reality. And He is a Holy Spirit. And He sanctifies His people.

Well, if you're not having victory, it's because He's not giving you the victory. So let's search for the reasons. Why is the Spirit not giving me victory? One thing we've looked at: because you're not seeking to do what He's telling you to do; trusting in His power to do it. Or you've got the Spirit grieved.

What are some other ways we can grieve the Spirit? Look. Sin is what grieves the Spirit. (incomplete thought) James talked about choosing things that are excellent. Does that mean that if I choose that which isn't most excellent, that it may grieve the Spirit? It may. I mean, it may. If you're willingly making wrong choices, even though that which you're choosing it's just way down the line in usefulness and profitableness in your life...

Brethren, here's the thing. There's undoubtedly some people who it's like hearing about Spurgeon's take on Robert Chapman. How does a man come to be the holiest man? The most Christ-like man that somebody has ever met? People who met Lloyd-Jones were blown away. How does a man get to be like that? Same way. Without Christ, he's nothing. It's by the Spirit. If you want to live in the greatest demonstrations of the Spirit of God, the people who are going to live most in that power, most in that joy, most in that realm, they're the people who are most diligent to walk so carefully before Him. They don't want to grieve Him. They don't want to make a misstep. They don't want to settle for the status quo. They're trying to reach the excellence. They don't want to offend Him. They don't want to do that which would bring a cloud.

Now think with me about the Spirit. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 talks about being sanctified by the Spirit. I can think of a place there in John 17:17 that says that we're sanctified by the Word. Now let me ask you this. Are we sanctified by both? On the one hand over here, when you read Scripture, you're sanctified by the Word; and then, over here, you're sanctified by the Spirit when you do something else? Something different? Or do you think that perhaps the Spirit of God is the one who puts to death sin? Makes us pure; makes us sanctified by way of the Scriptures. At least one of the ways. Yeah. "Sanctify them by Thy truth. Thy Word is truth." Sanctified by the Holy Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit who takes that Word.

So here's a reality. You are not going to live in the power of the Spirit - the sanctifying power of the Spirit unless you're in the Word. Jesus said the Word sanctifies. "Sanctify them by Thy Word." He's praying to His Father. Let me ask you this. Do you think that prayer is still powerful till this very hour?

But I can tell you this, it's kind of like the man who won't try to get up when he's told to get up. If you have this book on your shelf and it's collecting dust, and you're over there struggling with sexual immorality, if you want to know what the problem is go look at yourself in the mirror.

Look, if you know that Jesus Himself - what you have to understand is this: Jesus didn't just say that we're sanctified by the Word; Jesus is actually praying to His Father that we would be sanctified by the Word. There's a difference. The second is better because it expresses the truth of the first, but it also says that God has been prayed to by our Messiah who intercedes all the time on our behalf. And He's actually prayed that prayer that this Word would sanctify us. If there's no other reason for you never to skip a day to be in this book, then it's that. You say, are you trying to tell me that there's a connection between me falling into doing something with that mouse with my computer that I shouldn't have done and the fact that I didn't read the Scriptures that morning? Well, I hope you have the logical abilities to recognize the answer to that is yes. I hope you can put the pieces together and recognize, oh... yeah. He prayed that we would be sanctified through it. I'm not going to the Word of God. Not that you go to it like a magic formula. That's not it. It's that you go to it and you feast on the truth and you feast on the Christ. Remember - beholding the Lord, the Spirit transforms us. You see, you go there and you find Him. You find the Lord. You behold His glory. You look at Him and His sexual purity. Go there. Hear what He said. Trust that if He told you to gouge out eyes, you can do it. You can do it. He'll help you do it. He sent the Spirit here to help us to live that way.

Anybody think of anything else? Any other connections? Any other connections you can think of in Scripture about the Spirit of God?

(from the room) Yeah, John Piper preached a message on Romans 8:13 - "By the Spirit, we put to death the deeds of the body." And he was talking about he was looking for Scripture - where in Scripture does it say that we receive the Holy Spirit? And he brought up Galatians 3:2 which says, "Let me ask only this: did you receive the Spirit by works of the law? Or by hearing with faith?" And he brought out it's by hearing with faith that we receive the Spirit.

Tim: Why don't you read the first five verses all together?

(from the room) Of Galatians 3?

Tim: Yeah.

(from the room) "Oh foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed..."

Tim: Now, see you want to stop right there. You see, if you just dive in - which isn't wrong - I mean, you went to the text that Piper dealt with. But see, if you dive in where you dove in, you know what you get? You get the word "faith." It's a good word. But you know what? Sometimes it's a very abstract term. You hear "faith" and you miss the heart and soul. (incomplete thought)

You don't want to ever miss verse 1. Verse 1 is the heart and soul of where this faith focuses. It is Christ who has been publicly crucified before you. There is power. There is power in looking to the cross in faith. Because brethren, look, what that cross does - "Blessed are the poor in spirit..." When you're in a place where you come before the Lord: Lord, I can't beat sexual immorality. I'm not strong enough. But Jesus died on the cross. In that death on the cross, He unleashed magnificent power. Can you think of any other verse? I'm thinking of one from Peter. Can you think of any other verse that talks about the cross and righteousness? Or the cross and power? The cross and producing righteousness?

Anybody think of any other verses?

(from the room) Titus 2:14 - "Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people..." To purify for Himself a people of His own possession. I mean, yeah. You want to look at the cross.

Tim: Now, keep going. That was just v. 1. (Galatians)

(from the room) "Let me ask you this. Did you receive the Spirit by words of the law or by hearing with faith?"

Tim: Ok. That's in the beginning. Did you receive? This is when you first received. Did that happen by faith or by works? Hearing of faith or the works of the law? Now, keep going.

(from the room) "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

Tim: Oh, you better stop right there. Perfected. That's the word we want. Do you want to be perfected when it comes to sexual immorality? You see what he's saying? You started the right way. Perfected is another way to say He's transforming us, from glory to glory. That's being perfected. It's being made like Christ. He says you talk about grieving the Spirit? You see, he's been talking about the Spirit and now in the next verse, he's going to come back to the Spirit again. Keep going. "Did you suffer so many things in vain if indeed it was in vain? Does He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith?"

Now there it is. Now it's not received; now it's supplied. And it's the ongoing working of the supernatural in your life. You see, he jumped from one to the other. And right in the middle, he brought up, what are you thinking?

See, I would say this to all of us. If you move away from the cross, he would say this to you: what are you thinking? You know what? I don't doubt you can find lots of plans - quick ten step plans, you know, probably adulterers anonymous or something is out there. But brethren, there may be a lot of quick fix programs on the fast path to sexual purity. Undoubtedly, there's all sorts

of books written and there's programs out there. People get tempted by these things. Come spend \$2,000 and come to this program and we'll fix you; we'll set you right. You know, if somebody simply took their Bibles and sat down with the first five verses of Galatians 3, and they just took time to study those, meditate on them before the Lord and get on their face, and really seek to understand the implications of those passages, you know where the power is? In the Spirit. You know how the Spirit is supplied? By faith. By faith in Him who was held up before them as publicly crucified.

Can I tell you something? There is a reason why the Lord's Supper is an ongoing ordinance in the life of the church. It's because God wants us to come back to the death of His Son over and over and over and remember Him. Why? Because it is there that your very spiritual life exists. That is where the price was paid. That is where the sin was paid. That is where He died on the cross to make a people that would be pure and righteous and holy and people of His own possession. That is where the power flows. The Spirit supplied as we look.

What you have to recognize is this: Was the Spirit not just as real in the lives of these Galatians as in Paul himself? Yes. Why was the Spirit not doing what the Spirit could have done to perfect the people? Because they went about it wrong. Undoubtedly, we come back to grieving the Spirit. But the thing is, when we take our eyes off of Christ and we seek other gimmicks in our seeking to be perfected - don't get hung up on that. That's Paul's terminology. We should be pursuing perfection. I'm not saying that Paul is teaching we'll find it. But I'm saying we should be shooting for it. If you should be shooting towards Christ-likeness, how could it not be perfection? That's what He is. Should we be seeking to be perfected? Yes. We should. How? Well, you see, when you do what the Galatians did, you know what he has to tell them not to do in chapter 5? Bite and devour each other. Why?

You see what happens when you try to live the Christian life and you're not tapping into the power of the Spirit? Suddenly, carnality, fleshy-ness breaks out in their life. You say, could it be that I'm struggling with sexual sin because I've purposely missed the Lord's Supper the last two times? Yeah. Could it be because I haven't been reading in one of the Gospel's and actually taking the time to behold the Christ there? And to see Him? And to think on His death? Yeah.

I mean, you see, the Spirit is your best Friend. But what you want is the Spirit in such a condition as He is eager to help you be holy. And He is moving to make you holy. And He is pouring grace upon you. And He is infusing power into you. That's what you want. And that's how you'll be victorious. But just because you have the Spirit, doesn't mean He's all-out moving for you to overcome. There's all sorts of ways we can grieve, we can quench, we can not use the very means, we can not seek to appropriate the things that the Spirit (incomplete thought). It's like, you know, the Spirit can say to us, you know, there's no ink in that pen. But you get down there and right with it. I'll cause the ink to flow once you're writing with it. So much of the Christian life is like that, where we are being told, do the impossible. And we're not supposed to look and say it's impossible; I'm not going to do it. No. This is a life that we walk in faith, trusting that God's power will flow through us. Without Christ, I can't do anything. But with Christ

strengthening me, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. But you see, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. It's not that He's going to do them for me. I have to actually set forth. I need to step.

Peter didn't just float on the water. Jesus didn't just waft him out and he just floated out and sat down on the water and stood on it. Jesus said, "Come." He needed to get up. He needed to step out of the boat. And then he found, it supported him. And then when he took his eyes off Christ?

You see, Jesus is telling us the same thing with regards to sexual sin. Here He is out walking the perfect life when it comes to purity. And He says, "Follow Me." "Come on out of that boat." And you set your eyes on Him and you put your foot out, and you still start walking in purity. And guess what happens when you take your eyes off of Him? You sink. And then what happens? You put your eyes back on Him. And He reaches out and He grabs hold of you and He takes you back up. It's the same. It's the same over and over throughout the Christian life. The Spirit of God. Your best friend when it comes to putting to death the deeds of the body. Any other comments or thoughts on that?

Father, help us to live in the light of these truths and the power of these truths. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.