

How to Fight Against Lust and Sexual Sin

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Well, what we wanted to cover tonight was, we spent lots of weeks examining the mosaic law last week and before that we looked at Sampson, and before that we went through Genesis. And we considered a number of things that the Word of God has to say, and historical events that unfolded in Genesis. We looked at the various places where sexual sin came in. And what we wanted to cover tonight is... how do you battle? How do you fight?

And you know that's really... if you're in the battle... that's really what... I mean you want tools. You want somebody to come along and say, "Here's how you do it." "Here's the solution." If you struggle with loneliness or you struggle with , unfulfilled sexual desires, you battle with lust, you battle with that temptation, you battle with the remnants of homosexuality. Whatever it is, whatever kind of sexual immorality that we might be tempted to... And you know, the thing is, this is obviously something that, you know, when you're young, you have Paul saying to Timothy, "flee youthful lust". The thing is some of these things are, you know, they are difficult to the end, but they can be definitely intensified and are even referred to as youthful lust, they can be intensified in youth.

I remember, and I think of speaking to one pastor on an occasion... Kyle White and I had lunch with a pastor from Mansfield, TX. And he was telling us about some 96 year old, or something like that, year old man in his assembly and this pastor said that he asked this old guy in his church "does the battle ever stop?". This man in his 90's said "no". Now, does it become less intense? Possibly. Probably. I mean, it's not called "youthful lust" for no reason. I mean there's things that in youth, there's things that when we're teenagers, or in our twenties, can be stronger, as far as the temptation goes.

So, what do we do? I mean what's the... there's no question about it, that we see what's wrong. There's no question that we see and hear the word "flee youthful lust". Okay, is that all there is to it? You just run. Any time you see anything, you just run. And certainly that's what we are being called to do... being called to run away. But is that enough? Are there enough tools there?... Just run away! Just, you know, okay, "Don't let anybody deceive you

with empty words. It's because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." Is that enough? ... "don't associate with them." Don't have anything... Is it enough to hear in the Word of God "run", "flee fornication", "flee youthful lust"? Jesus comes along and He says, "if you even look at a woman with lust after her, you've committed adultery in your heart already."

He goes on... He's talking about, okay, you gouge out eyes. He's given us pretty graphic symbolism. "Gouge out an eye, chop off a hand." If that's what it takes, it's better for you to lose those things and go into the Kingdom, into Heaven, than being cast away, not having done these things, being whole. Is that enough? We can see it's wrong. Here you are and you're now identifying with Christ. I'm going to be a follower of Christ, and lust comes in like a storm. You're being tempted. There is a draw. There is a pull. There is a desire. It just feels like it's going to swallow you up. And what do you do? Is it enough just to say "well, flee youthful lust". I mean, you know you go to somebody and you're wanting accountability and you're confessing to them, "I struggle with this", just flee from it. Just run away. Is that... is that good? Is that enough? Do you find that helpful? Is it enough to know "hey, if you don't cut these things off, God's going to throw you into Hell"? Is that enough? Is that good? Is that what we need to fight?

I mean look, I think we would all admit this. You know, anybody here that's past puberty, you know about sexual desire and temptation. Now, we may all be at different points in our life as far as the type of temptations that we encounter. Some of you may come from a background where there was homosexuality and you struggle with that. That is a massive temptation. Others, you know, it's something that you have never struggled with but you know, you struggle likewise. Look, scripture doesn't put homosexuality in a category away from sexual immorality as a whole. Fornicators and adulterers don't inherit the Kingdom of Heaven just as much as homosexuals don't. It's not like just because it's heterosexual that it's somehow okay. It's damnable. "let no one deceive you with empty words". The wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience because of just such sins... sexual immorality, impurity. That's why.

So, you know what, I'm going to say something about this that's obvious to everyone of you. It's that if you just suddenly didn't have a desire for it, that would fix it, right? If all the desire was just taken away, that would fix it. I mean, you know, think about it. The fact is that the kind of attraction, the kind of lust, the kind of draw, the kind of temptation that we

feel, towards whatever it is, the opposite sex or the same sex... I mean you don't feel that towards a tree along the side of the road. There are all manner of objects in this world you have no attraction for at all. You don't have any problem with that. You don't have any problem where there's no attraction. If you could just turn the switch off.

And really, in Christianity, isn't that what it's kind of what it's all about? It's not just turning it off. You know if we just simply got to a place where our desire was diminished. Or another desire was increased. Then we're on our way to fixing the problem. Isn't that what has to happen? You know, why do people fall to sexual sin? Because of that draw, that temptation is strong enough that right at that moment, they just give way. They have no other desire that's greater at the moment to hold them back. That becomes the greatest desire. That becomes the deception, right? It is with these things, they're deceptive desires. I mean, that's what you have in Ephesians. It talks about putting off the old man, which belongs to your former way of life. And it talks about these desires. They're corrupt. They're deceitful. They're deceitful desires. Why is it deceitful? Because it gives you a promise and right at that time you believe that promise. And you're drawn towards the promise it gives you of satisfaction, of pleasure, and nothing else is stronger right at that moment. That's why you cave. That's why people cave to it. It's like nothing else matters. But if you can get to a place where something else does matter more.

It's kind of like, you know, how can I do what I can't do? Well, if I'm enabled to do it? Right? That's basically it. You know, you have a child and you say to that child, you know, "go pick up that barbell over there". They say they can't. But if I work with my child and I get them to the place where they are strong enough to do it. Then they can do it. And that's the solution. And so if we got to a place... the truth is if we got to a place where we didn't desire that as much, and we desired other things more, than we've fixed the problem. If you can kill the deceitful desires to where you don't desire them as much.

You know those things that I desired when I was lost... like I literally, when I was lost, I was like a caged animal on Friday nights and Saturday nights. I mean, if I was at home, I... something came over me that was uncontrollable. I could not be at home. I needed to be out where something was happening. I needed to be out where my friends were. I needed to be out where the party was. I needed to be where the people... I needed to be at the bar. If I wasn't, I literally... I mean, I had a feeling inside of me that was uncontrollable. That's how it is when we're lost. We have these lusts. We have these draws. These pulls. We

can't resist them. They pull so hard. There's nothing in us that wants to resist them. Our will is to go with it. We buy into the lie that it's going to satisfy us. But if we got to the place where... we were actually were enabled not to desire, that's what we need. We need the power of it killed.

But now here's what scripture says. "All who belong..." How many of you know, or have ever heard a verse out of Galatians 5, verse 24? It says something there about all who belong to Christ. Anybody know what it says? What's true of everybody who belongs to Christ? The flesh has been crucified with it's lust and desires. Now you think about that. Lust and desire has been crucified.

Well, what's your idea of crucifixion? What does that look like? And what does it mean to crucify something? Torture and death. I mean you nail somebody to a cross, your intent is to kill them. It's to suck the life out of them and do it in a torturous fashion. What this is saying is that our flesh, if we belong to Christ, certain things happen to our desires. There's this idea of killing them. And it's true that what happens is the desires are being crucified. It says "crucified" like it's over and done, but we know that we have to cut off. We know that there's a battle. We know that we have to flee from youthful lusts. Because we know that there's a draw there. But what Galatians 5:24 is saying there is this is just true. If you belong to Christ, the pull is not... the pull is the difference between and very active, very lively, very strong person and one hanging on a cross. That's the difference. If it's not dead yet... The blood's draining out of it. It's hanging up there, and the life is going out of it. Until it's finally gone all together and we get swept into Heaven.

This is a truth. Look, you cannot take that text... and I recognize there are other ones that emphasis that there's a battle. There's other ones that emphasize that we need to put certain things to death. There's other ones that say not to let sin reign in your mortal bodies, to obey the passions of that body. Obviously there's still passions there, but there's an assumption now that you have that ability to not let that sin rule there. Which means the passions of the body have been diminished because of the crucified flesh and there's off setting desires. You desire other things more. In fact we're to desire to please God. We're to desire the will of God. We're to desire to please God. We'll have a hunger and thirst after righteousness. Those are realities. It's a power issue. It takes power.

Have you ever considered these verses? You know them, and often times we quote the first part. You know what it says right there towards the end of Ephesians three, "Now unto

Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think," "all that we ask or think". What does it say right after that? Anybody know? "According to the power at work within us." You know it's true of the Christian, there's a power at work within us. So if you're a Christian, there's a power at work within you. The passions that you formerly had are crucified and there's a power at work with in you. And you know how it says there in Romans 8:13? What's it say in the second half of 8:13, Romans? "But if by the spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live."

Okay. Here's what we need. We need power that is going to cause us to put to death the deeds of the body. And how do we do it? We do it in the power of another. We do it in the power of the Spirit. And what, clearly... I mean what happens? What happens? Well, when you're lost or you fall as a Christian, what happens right at that moment is you give in to the desire of the body. Clearly the power then that delivers us from that, the power of the Spirit, is going to do one of two things or a mixture of both. He is going to reduce our desire for elicited satisfaction and/or give us desires for other things that are greater.

I mean, you think about this... David Butterbaugh just had his fiftieth birthday at a Chinese restaurant. I went there hungry. I had the buffet. You walk out in the buffet in the Chinese restaurant, and you've been to Chinese restaurants with buffets? The stuff that they're serving there, how much of it's good? How much of it tastes really good? You need to be calculating, cause if you just go really hungry and you go to the first thing you see, you just fill your plate up with it. And then you walk down the line, and you're like "ah, they have this, I don't even have room on my plate anymore", cause everything is good. But you know if you're in a place like that, I knew, there's something there I wanted. I've been there before, right before Charity went to India. I'd had that Salmon there before, and I had purposely bypassed many other things that had an attraction to me, cause I wanted that more. And you know it's really same kind of thing when it comes to christian life. When you get to the place where you want to please Christ more. You want righteousness more. You want to be a good example more. You don't want to shame your wife or your kids more. You don't want to disgrace the ministry more. You want intimacy with Christ more. You want His smile more. You don't want to grieve the Spirit more. You want to be able to open up the Word of God and have it come to life more. You want to go to prayer and feel liberty and freedom and joy more. You want to go sit down on Sunday morning singing songs, and just be filled with making melody in your heart to the Lord. You want that more than you want the pleasure of

looking at something on the internet that's inappropriate.

Now, that's a little bit different idea. That tells you that there's a way out. That tells you that you never had the excuse "I had no option", cause you did. But that text doesn't really touch on the power. And that's...we need power. We need a power that alters our desires. And the power is God, yes, but more precisely the Holy Spirit. By the Holy Spirit, I actually have to figure out how to walk the Christian life, drawing on the power of another. And it's real power. "According to the power at work within us". It is a power. In fact, it is a power that Paul wants us to try to grasp. He calls it "an immeasurable greatness of power". And it is the very power that God used to raise Christ from the dead. It is resurrection power.

Now, Tawfiq read, today, all fifteen chapters of "Delivered by a Designer". So he undoubtedly came across a lot of good stuff in there. That probably is one of the better... if not maybe even one of the best works that's out there right now on this subject. So go ahead brother tell us what the Lord showed you.

Well, basically what you were just saying. As I was reading it, it reminded me of... maybe you all have heard of something called "Juneteenth"? It's a celebration. And basically what it celebrates is that the slaves in America had been liberated. They were freed. But those in Texas didn't know it. So they continued in their slavery, although they were free. And then when word came to them that they were freed, they left their chains and went on in their freedom. And the majority of the book focuses your attention on the reality that you're free. It's just like he was saying, that the Holy Spirit dwells within you. You do not have to do that sin. You're not a slave to that. You were a slave to sin. That's your old man. You are now a new creation who has the Spirit of God dwelling inside of you, which gives you power to put that sin to death.

One of the things that the brother was talking about in the book. He said that, you know, the stereotypical chicken with the head cut off. You cut the head off the chicken, it will continue to run around. I've killed a couple of snakes in my life and they continue to slither. And that is what you are battling. If you're a believer, it's not that you have this wicked nature and your regenerated nature is battling your wicked nature. If you're a believer, you have a new heart. This is the new covenant promise. "I will put a new heart in you." We have the Spirit of God. We have a new nature. We are born again. We are born from above. The metamorphosis has taken place and the old man has been put to death. Behold, all things have become new. This is who you are.

But, you say, why am I still battling? Why am I still wrestling with this and that's the flesh that still lives. But it's like he said, it's hanging on a cross and blood is dropping out of it. It's a chicken with its head cut off and it's going to die. Gradually as you continue on, ultimately in the new heavens and the new earth, it will be done away with completely and our new bodies will be given to us.

But before he jumped into, you know, the tactics and the strategies... and I found that as I talk to the young brothers who are battling with this thing, They always want to know, "okay, so what do I do?" They want strategies. But what I've noticed in the scripture... what the Lord does... you look at the book of Romans. Before He starts talking about how to live this thing out, He's focusing on who we are in Christ and that's so serious. What pastor Tim was saying is so essential that you must face the reality that you are free, that you are new, that you are released from the chains of sin and you do not have to do this any longer. Look at places like Ephesians chapter 1 where it says every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places has been given to you. Every spiritual blessing. Surely this includes the spiritual blessing of putting sin to death. Surely it includes the spiritual blessing of walking in integrity, walking in honesty, walking in the light of the Lord. Look in 2 Peter where it says that all things have been granted to you regarding life.... (and godliness, thank you brother.)

It's by the divine power that this has been granted. So you have it. Everything that you need if you're a believer. Everything that you need to walk in purity, to walk in integrity, to put sexual sin away. You have it. You're not trying to earn it. You're not trying to build it. You already have it. Now you need to cultivate that. And on my way here, I was listening to Pastor Tim as he was talking about the same subject a few years ago, "The battle of the mind regarding abstaining from sexual sin", and he focused our attention on beholding the Lord. And the reality that you are far less likely to go and chase after sexual sin after you have just beheld the glory of God.

Brought us some examples: Isaiah. He saw the Lord high and lifted up. Fell upon his face. Peter, he saw the Lord in his glory as he filled the boat with the fish. He fell on his face, "depart from me". Moses, the hind quarters of the Lord passing by the cleft of the rock as he's hidden in there. His face is glowing. He comes down. The people are terrified. And they say "Cover your face". The glory of the Lord, what it does to us. It brings worship out of us. A holy fear, a holy reverence. It requires a response and that response is not going on the internet and looking at pornography. That response after beholding the glory of the Lord is not going

and fornicating with your girlfriend or looking at the girls as they walk down the street. After you behold the Lord, the response is worship. The response is awe. The response is intimacy and a desire to learn more about him and get into his presence all the more.

And so the book... after it continually emphasizes the necessity of who you are in God, it's the indicative who you are. This is who you are. Look at Romans. It's who you are. Ephesians, chapter 1, who you are. If you're a believer, you're in Christ. You have the Spirit of God. You're chosen by God. You're forgiven of your sins. He has not just saved you from the wrath of God, He saved you from the power of sin. You have that. Now what do you do?

He gave some help. One of those things is, the Word of God. You've got to get into the Word of God. Read it. Memorize it. He gave an example of an officer. The officer walks around with a pistol. A firearm, if you will, on his side. You say now how foolish would it be if he was on duty and his weapon was in his trunk? It would be of no help. It's not easily accessible. It's not grab-able. He said that many believers... you have the truth, you have the Word of God, but it's in the back of your mind. And it's in the back of your mind when the temptation comes, it's not readily grab-able.

And you look at Jesus, he's in the wilderness. The devil's there. He comes to Him with temptation. What does he instantly do? Because the Word of God is instantly right in the front of His mind, He can say "it is written". "It is written." "It is written." It was there. It was accessible. It was ready. It was a weapon, a sword that is ready in the hand. Because if you're prepared, you don't want to wait until the temptation comes to try to search for the scripture. "Okay, what does it say about lust?" No! You want to have that already in your mind so that when it comes you can instantly respond to the lie, because that's what it is.

It's like Pastor Tim said, "it's a lie." Every temptation that comes to you is coming with a lie. And the lie is "I will satisfy you". The lie is " You deserve this". The lie is "it's not that bad". "You're just doing this, you're not doing that." The lie is "Well, you already fell, so what's the big deal if you do it again?" The lie is "Well, God's already forgiven you, so this is already provided for". All these lies have truth that will destroy them. And all these lies are constantly being thrown at you. When your out at school. When you're at work. When you're in the mall. When you're at the store. When you're watching television. When you're just laying there and they're coming to your mind, the images, the pictures. They're constantly presenting something to you that you must have a response for. And that response has to be the Word of God. That is where we fight.

It's like you said, "the battle is in the mind". That's where most of the battle takes place, in the mind. And so you have to fill your mind with the Word of God. Isn't that what the psalmist said? Psalm 119, "how can a young man keep his way pure?, by guarding it according to His Word." I love that. It's a picture I see, like a security guard. Guarding the door. The lie tries to come in, the security guard is there, he stops it. It's the Word of God. You can't come in here. It's guarded. It's protected. But then you have another picture in Proverbs, "the man without control is like a city without walls". Anything can come in. There is no guard. There's no protection. There's no barrier. There's nothing to block against and everything comes in. The Word of God is where our help is found. "I have hidden thy Word in my heart, that I might not sin against you". This is where the battle is fought. This is large part where it's won.

Another thing he also illustrates that's been extremely helpful to me is, you have to have fences. What I mean by that is you have barriers, you have standards, you have things that are already set in your mind that you will not do. Places you will not go. Things you will not watch. Things you will not listen to. Situations and scenarios that will not be allowed into your life. Before they happen. You can't start making up list and rules and standards and building fences when the war is on. You have to have it now. You have to build it now, because when they come, and they are coming, that wall is already there.

So, you know, these are some of the things the brother was bringing forth in the book, the Word of God, putting it in, memorizing it, meditating upon it, having the barriers that are up. The Bible says "flee", flee sexual immorality", "abstain from it"... and one of the ways he was pointing out that you flee from it, not just when it comes, but, you flee from it by preparing for it before hand and that's another way of fleeing.

You know, I think if you just ask somebody, hey, those that are purest, those that excel in the Kingdom, they are men and women of the Word. Right? You'd say that. I mean, is that characteristic of somebody that's getting victory? Yeah, they're in the Word. What's the connection? I mean, let me just tell you, Paul says it, "if you walk in the Spirit you will not fulfill... you won't do the works of the flesh". You won't, right? And that includes all manner of sexual perversion, sexual immorality. You won't do that. If you walk in the Spirit, you won't do it, right? Doesn't it say that? Doesn't it say that in Galatians 5? He certainly says it.

This is the solution for all of you. And for every Christian that's ever lived. If you walk in the Spirit, you will not... look, the first thing is, you got to be saved. Yeah, some people

trying to be Christian who aren't Christian, and it's just failure. But for every child of God throughout all the ages, here it is. This is the biblical formula, you walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfill the works of the flesh. That's what He says. But, this comes back to the same thing he was telling you before. By the Spirit, we put to death the deeds of the body. Walking in the Spirit is that same truth. By the Spirit, I put to death. Here's what you and I have to figure out. The Spirit of God, you all testify, is real. The Spirit of God is with us. But how do I tap the supply of power that the Spirit has there? And you know what, clearly, if He's exhorting us to walk in the Spirit, there's ways to not walk in the Spirit.

Certainly, there are Christians who fall into the works of the flesh and are not living according to the fruits of the Spirit. Certainly, there is the danger of grieving the Spirit, by which we get that power. This is the question of the Christian life. How do I... Because there's a responsibility aspect on our part. It's true that we need to have the right mindset and that needs to undergird this whole thing. I mean, you see that reality right there in Romans. Romans six, verse eleven and twelve. First I have to count myself dead to sin. And then I resist sin reigning in my mortal body. I have to think right before I act right.

Clearly, how we think is important. Knowing who we are and what's at our disposal. But, does just knowing who I am automatically bring me to walking in the Spirit? Not necessarily. I mean, I know who I am in Christ, but if I grieve the very Spirit from which I get that power, the channel is clogged. How... I mean, it's the question of the Christian life, sanctification. How we walk a pure life. How we walk godly. How we walk in Christ-likeness. We have to walk in the power of the Spirit. We have to walk according to the Spirit. We have to, by the Spirit, put to death these things.

I guarantee you this... the Spirit of God has power to kill every single sexual, illicit sexual desire you have. Undoubtedly! By the power of the Spirit, you will overcome when that power is unleashed. The question of the ages is "how do you get it?, how do you tap it?" I mean, you know if I have to move a heavy desk and I'm asking one of you guys to help, "hey, come help me move this desk"... I know where you are. I can ask you "hey, come over and lend me a hand here". You apply yourself. This thing moves pretty easy. It's something I couldn't have moved on my own. You helped me move it. I mean the reality here is, I don't have any power on my own. I am only resting on the Spirit for the ability to have any success in conquering here.

But how do I tap it? You see that's the great question. We all understand, it takes

desire-killing power, and desire-giving power. I need the wrong desires killed and I need the right desires made alive. If I would only come to love what I need to love and hate what I need to hate, it'd be easy, right? I mean, you know, if some attractive person of the opposite sex walks by and I just... you know it's like sparks on wet kindling, it's not going anywhere. Why?, because my desires for my wife, my love for my wife but more than that. My love for Christ is that much stronger.

Well yeah, I'm not blind, I can see she's attractive. It's not like you look at that and say... you don't look at it and say "yuck". But I'm not going there because there's too many other desires in my life in another direction than to go in that direction. Does it have any pull? Well, yeah. And obviously if I entertained it, the pull could become stronger. But right at that moment, I'm not looking that way. Like Job, my eyes aren't going over there because there are enough desires leading me this way. But how do I tap the Spirit's power so that the desires are there, so that I don't fall back to sexual immoral practices or homosexual desires? How do I not fall? How do I get it? How to I get it so that when the temptations come, they just don't have the pull like they used to when I'd fall into it all the time? How? That's the question of the ages. Tap into the power of the Spirit.

Listen, the Spirit is a person. He's real. He abides with and is in the Christian. All of His power is there. It's just, how do I get Him to give it to me? I mean we all understand the spirit of God has sufficient power to make us perfect on the spot. But there's a way that God is pleased to be glorified to have us tap that power. And of course, if you can just think right off, the Spirit of God came into this world to glorify Christ. That might be really helpful to how we tap this.

Look, the truth is I think it's, what, about Galatians 3, verse 5. It says plainly, where the supply of the Spirit comes. What is that terminology? The supply of the Spirit. What does that mean? The supply of the Spirit. Well the supply of the power of the Spirit. And it comes how? What's that? By the hearing of faith. That's exactly what it says. Now, think about this. The Spirit of God came to glorify Christ. The way we get the supply of the Spirit is by faith in Christ. Now, look. Not just do you get the Spirit in the first place... that was said earlier. You can read Galatians 3:1-5. It's not jut how you receive the Spirit, but how you get the supply of the Spirit is exactly the same way.

You see, this is why scripture... this is why Paul is so careful to point out, living the Christian life is done the same way you first come to Christ the first time. It's by faith. But

look, don't get lost in that word, faith. What is faith? Faith is...it's seeing Christ and trusting what He is. Who He is.

I mean, look. Tawfiq was talking about this Word. The reason you dive into this Word is because it's the Word of Christ. Faith comes by hearing, hearing through His Word of Christ. In this you find the commands of Christ. You find the person of Christ. You find the death of Christ. You find Christ exalted. You find in the Old Testament all these pictures of Christ. You find that... you find all manner of commandments that we never kept, but Christ kept, under the law. He came under the law. He kept it all perfectly.

You come into the New Testament. You have four gospels. Just the life of Christ. You have these epistles that explaining all this doctrinal reality about what Christ did. It's all about Christ. All focused on Him. And what happens is, that as we become involved with Christ, and intimate with Christ, and walking with Christ, and praying to Christ, and in His Word, and seeing Him in there... isn't this exactly what we find? From one degree of glory to another, we're transformed into that same image as we behold the Lord. It is done by the Spirit who is the Lord. And what it have to do with? "Beholding the glory of the Lord"... by degrees.

And you know what, it may be that you have devotions and you dive in that Word and you come away and you say, "well, I don't feel any different". No, you don't feel any different, because it happens by degrees, but I guarantee this, the man or the woman who is constantly going back there, constantly, day after day after day... I was just telling my family recently in devotions. It's just like my son Joshua. You know, if I just stare at him I can't see him growing. But it's really evident to me that he's growing. Why? Because it's happening by degrees. I can't visibly see it, but it's happening, and it's happening constantly, and he's growing. I mean, he's added a foot in very little time. I can't visibly detect it, but it's happening so that, you know, if you haven't seen him... Charity goes away to India, she's comes back, she can see, "Woah, he grew!"

That's just how it is with a Christian. You know, you look away a little bit and you come back in 3 month or 6 months, it's like, "Wow, they're growing!" I guarantee you. How's that happening? Well, all that growth is godliness. It's Christ likeness. It's because all these degrees of glory add up to a very significant growth and suddenly they're overcoming. They're overcoming sin. They're living godly. They're living like Christ. The way He lived, the way He walked, they're living and walking. It's far more evident now. They're getting mastery over sexual temptation. Why?

And I guarantee you this, it didn't happen by just osmosis. It didn't just happen because they grit their teeth. And/or by a list of rules... see that's one of the mistakes too. Yes, there's a place for fences. But if you get to a place where you think the fences are going to do it, you're in trouble. You set up fences without spending quality time with Christ, it's not going to work. You'll trample those fences down because your desires will take you over the top of them.

You've got to go... look, this is how it is. The Spirit, and by Him, you put to death these deeds of the body. You have to walk in the Spirit, in His power. His power, He, His supply, it is supplied by faith in Christ, trusting Him, looking to Him, beholding Him. And what happens is the Spirit just gets excited when Christ gets glorified, and honored, and worshiped, and trusted. And the Spirit says, I like that. I'm pouring out my power here.

That's how it happens. It's going to happen in connection with Christ, all the time. And if you try any other way... that's what faith is. You don't want to miss that. Faith is not this ambiguous thing that you can't put any definition to. It constantly has to be in our minds... this idea of looking away from my own efforts and my own help, and my own self, and seeing, and beholding the beauty in Christ. And beholding a help in Christ. And beholding the cross in Christ. Beholding that in that cross was unleashed power to save me from the power of my sin. Not just the guilt of it, but the power that's in the cross. And it's not just that it happened and it automatically comes to me. It comes to me as I behold it, as I gaze.

That's what faith is all about. Faith is looking somewhere, not at yourself. It's looking at Christ. And if you try any other way to fight this battle, you'll miserably fail. And it happens by degrees. If you want... if you think you're going to have 100% success... look, I can tell you this. I know of nobody who started the Christian life and did not fail, fall, or falter with regards to sexual sin. If you have this idea that, you know, there are some folks that don't talk about it as much. And you know what, there likely are examples. I just don't know of any personally. Of anybody that's been honest enough to talk about it, I know of nobody... personally.

I mean, you know, you say, "what?, the Apostle Paul... you going to say he fell?" No, look, I don't know about the Apostle Paul because it doesn't say. It doesn't say what his struggles were. He had grace at a level that few others have. But I know this, even among pastors, the typical testimony is that there's a struggle. There's a battle, and it's not 100% victory. There's falls... sometimes repeated. There's tears. There's bitter weeping, like Peter.

There's a battle.

But in spending quality and deep time in the Word, and in prayer, communing with Christ, coming to know Him, going to His Word, not just as ritualistic to work through your daily reading, but the stop and see Christ, to watch Him as He walked and talked... admire Him, to hear His words, see how He talked, and listen to His promises. You do that day in and day out and then you know what? Suddenly you come to realize the power of sexual sin is fading as the glory of Christ is increasing in my site.

And as my person is being shaped and conformed and molded to Him by the Spirit. Resurrection power is being channeled a little more by degrees, a little more, a little more, a little more. But it is an irresistible power. It is the raw power of God and sin cannot hold up against it. Temptation cannot hold up. It's not just God giving me a way out. It's the power of God killing old desires of the body and putting new desires and they are real. And they're powerful. They're felt. The tug is diminished and there's a draw, a pull in another direction.

But, there's no substitute. You cannot walk in the Spirit unless you're finding Christ, unless you're finding His glory. There will be no power any other way. And that's where the Galatians went wrong. They were seeking to be perfected by the law. You seek to be perfected anywhere, any way, any how, other than Christ, failure! Mark it down. You can grit your teeth, go to sexual immoral-ous, anonymous or whatever. I don't think there is such a thing, but...

Look, you can try all the human ways. You can try all the human means and they're not going to work. They won't do it. You'll not tame that dragon. There's only one way, the power of God slaying it, by the Spirit, you've got to put these deeds of the body to death. Which means you're reliant, not on your own strength, or on the world. You're reliant on the power of God by way of the Spirit.

But the Spirit, being one person of the God-head, will not channel that power to you unless you are worshiping, admiring, and glorifying the second person. That's the way God the Father set it up. The first person... He set it up for the second person to be glorified. He didn't want to glorify the Spirit in it... we recognize that the power comes from Him, but the Spirit of God Himself defers to Christ. He came to glorify Him. Not Himself. Christ.

That's why these churches... charismatic churches that make a huge deal out of the Spirit, are so carnal, and given over to sexual sin, and greed, and covetousness. All these health, wealth, prosperity guys. Given over to every lust. They exalt the Spirit, not Christ.

Where Christ is most exalted, people will be most pure. There's no substitute for this. This... I mean, you can make, you can draw the links all the way through the chain.

You need power. The Spirit has the power. The Spirit is supplied by faith. Not faith in faith, or faith in the Spirit. By faith in Christ, which is looking to Christ and trusting Christ and seeing Christ. That's the chain. There's no substitute at all. You want to change your desires? You want to stop lusting? You want to stop being pulled into the internet? You want to stop doing what you do that is like the gentiles, what they do who know not God? You want to stop doing shameful things in secret places in the darkness?

There's no substitute, but abiding in the glory of Christ, drawing near to Him, beholding the glory of God and the face of Christ. There's no substitute. That's how the Word of God comes in. Because you don't see Christ anywhere except in that book. Yes, you can know some things about God through creation. But as far as His Son, as far as salvation, as far as the cross, as far as His beauty. It's in this book. That's the chain.

And even if you don't get the chain, please know this... people that spend lots of time communing with Christ and prayer and in His Word, they're the ones that tend to be godly. This is the reason why. People that try any other way... You try like the Galatians, going to the law. I'll tell you, you can gaze at the seventh commandment out of the ten commandments from now till doomsday, and you're not going to get any help. That's where the law fails you.

Is it good? Yeah, it's a good standard. But, you know what, God did what the law couldn't do, because it was weakened by our flesh. The law never gave help. But Jesus Christ... He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. He gave Himself for sin. And He conquered the power so that those of us who walk according to the Spirit we're freed, we're helped. We've broken the bond. The law of the Spirit of life trumps over this law of sin and death. We are released from the grip of a power that we in our own strength could not release ourselves from. But the Spirit does. And Christ bought this for us.

But don't miss this. If you go to the law, you'll find no help there. In fact all the law tends to do is stir up more sinful passion. That's what it did with the Galatians. There's a stirring up of carnal mindsets and carnal activity towards one another. That's what the law will do. You need Christ. It's not a magic fix. It's not going to happen in a day. But by degrees. And so you give yourself to it day in and day out, calling on the Lord, asking for help, going to Him, walking with Him, communing with Him. And there's no substitute for time with Him.

If you're into the five minute Christian deal a day, five minute devotion, one minute reading, you know, whatever kind of garbage books that are out there, that's not it. And you know what, even some of you guys move into the Grace House, you want accountability. Accountability's not going to do it. That's like these fences I'm talking about. If you try to substitute Christ with accountability, failure. It's failed right there. Now, accountability can be good. But no substitute for Christ.

All your fences, all your accountability, all your gizmos and gadgets you put on your internet to try and keep your... that's useless, that's just foolish. I mean I'm not saying there may not be a place for it, and it could be helpful. But look, if you're not communing with Christ, you think putting some kind of barrier on your internet is going to do it? It's not going to do it. That isn't going to do anything. You'll bypass that in a second. You'll just take it off your computer. You'll go to somebody else's computer. You'll just feed off the pictures in your imagination that are already there. It's no protection.

You need the power of the Spirit supplied by faith in Christ. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Seeing Christ in that word... don't... whatever your Bible reading get... look, I do not recommend a Bible reading schedule that starts in Genesis and then for, you know, two thirds of the year, before you get to Matthew, and then you do four gospels straight in a row, and then you get on to the Epistles. Intermix your Bible reading with the four gospels all year long.

I remember John MacArthur saying... he preached a message in the morning, message in the evening, throughout his whole ministry and he said he always aimed at preaching one of the gospels, morning or evening. Or something... typically it was one of the gospels because he wanted Christ before his people at all times. That's healthy. That's good. That's wise. Because he's absolutely right. That's where the power comes from. That's where a transformed church comes from.

Okay, Amen. Alrighty brethren, may God help you fight this battle. Which you know you can see the battle is fought on the level of being with Christ. If you're going to discipline yourself to godliness, the discipline is, you've got to schedule your lives, and your time, even with Christians. It's no good, fellowship is no good if it's robbing you of our time with Christ. You've got to schedule your lives and discipline your lives to get alone with Christ.

If any of you men are living at the Grace House and you cannot get alone with Christ there, move out. If you cannot figure out a place in that house to go or a place you can walk

to or a library you can go hide out in or somebodys vehicle that you can go get inside, and you are not getting quality time alone with Christ because of the living situation, wherever it is, Grace House or anywhere else, get out. Don't stay there. Don't kill yourself spiritually if you're in any kind of situation where you cannot get with Christ. There's no substitute. Go walk in the cemeteries.

You've got to have that or you cannot win this fight. You will not win this fight. You'll be lukewarm. You'll be battling carnality all the time. You'll be grieving the Spirit. There's no substitute for the Christian life, than Christ Himself. And feeding on Him. He said you need to eat His flesh. Drink His blood. It means you've got to take the truths of Him in and digest them and chew them. You will not be a giant in the Christian faith if you don't get this straight.

And remember what Hudson Taylor said, "The giants in the faith... they're the ones that have faith in a great God." But the truth is that there are...look, all you have to do is look around in our church. There are people that excel others. There are people that bypass others. Throughout history there have been those who have lived godlier lives. And it comes back to this. Look at their devotional life. Look at their walk. Look at their discipline in getting alone with Christ. There's no substitute.