Killing Sin - Part 2: How the Christian Fights

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Preacher: BK Smith

[0:00] Dear Holy Heavenly Father, we just ask for your continued blessing on our time together as we give you our worship, O Lord.! We just give you our hearts, we give you our ears, I give you my mouth, O Lord. May you sanctify all of us as we come under your word.

And Father, I pray that in this process, tender hearts are made, reluctant servants are made into focused servants, O Lord.
May you sanctify us by your word. In your name we pray, amen. Please have a seat. My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving as one of the pastors here along with Dave.
We are in Romans chapter 8, Romans chapter 8, more specifically verses 12 and 13. If you've been around for a while, we haven't had the pleasure to speak, get to know you.
Please avail yourself. I know Dave and I are trying to make ourselves available as much as we can. Our desire is to know you. So just as Dave articulated in the beginning, our desire is to see lost people saved.
[1:21] That is, people coming to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And the people in the middle, it's kind of that, the new believers to multiplying believers, we desire to see you to grow in the knowledge and maturity of your faith.

Because we want you on task with us. So just one quick announcement. I forgot before I got into the text. We have this Amazon thing coming, CityServe, as you may or may not know.
It's an opportunity where Amazon gives us the returned products. They have a warehouse and they have asked us to partner with them. It's Coastal Church is the main church that runs it in the city. And we're going to start that ministry here using it to help those people who are in need. And Alex is going to be adding leadership to it, but he's not here today.
So I can't have him stand up and wave to you. But Gene is over there. Gene, do you want to give a wave? He's usually with Gene. But he's going to give some leadership to it. He's the one who's organizing it.
[2:29] So if you'd like to be a part, I know many of you have contacted me. He's going to have an information meeting coming. Lord willing, we'll have something in the brochure next week. But he's going to call you guys all together and he's going to start putting the works together on this.

So is that all right? We got that? Everyone clear as a bell? Good. Awesome. All right, let's just turn to Romans 8, 12, 13. When we read this, some of you may not understand the significance of this verse.
This verse is so significant that there are entire books written specifically on verse 13. Because there's this important command that Paul gives us in this verse.
And today, we kind of spoke about what that meant last week. Today is going to be a little bit of a different type of sermon. It's really a whole sermon on practical application of how do we apply the command of this verse.
So just read along with me, starting in verse 12. It says, So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to the flesh.
[3:39] And remember what he's talking about, flesh and spirit. Flesh, he's talking about it's a worldly existence. You are either in the world where the flesh exists or you are in the spirit.

Those are the only two existences that exist. So you're either on one side or the other. Notice in verse 13, he says, For if you live according to the flesh, you will die.
That's a warning. But if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
So if you live on this world, you are going to do the deeds of the flesh that ends in destruction. Over here on the spirit side, it adds this command.

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If you put to death the deeds of the body, what he's talking about, there's a technical word called, it's the mortification of the flesh. Because we live in this world where we once resided in the flesh and that flesh has power over us.
[4:47] But once we move to the kingdom of the spirit, we're no longer under the domain of the flesh, but that flesh still fights us. And he gives us this simple warning.

If your life is identified with the flesh, you might not be in the spirit. So you could say, I follow Jesus. I love Jesus. I accepted Jesus in my heart.
All those things. But if your life is identified with the flesh, you might be of the flesh and not really of the spirit.
So last week we looked at four truths from this section. The first one is we have an obligation. And that obligation is to mortify the flesh, which means to put to death the deeds of the body.
The second point that we learned is that we're at war. The flesh wars against the spirit. We may be lost to them, but they do not want us to be effective.
[5:46] The third thing is the Christian doesn't fight alone. We have the spirit indwelling within us to fight. And the fourth point we brought up is this war has eternal consequences.

And we saw that although sin has lost its right to rule over the Christian, sin continues to fight and resist. And I want you to remember when Paul's talking about sin, he's not particularly talking about actions only.
He's actually talking about as a power. There is a power associated with the flesh that is working against a believer. So last week's teaching leaves us with an overriding question.
It's how do I fight? How do I fight this power? How do I fight the flesh? And you might be asking that.
And it's a simple question. BK, what do I do when anger starts to rise up in me? What do I do when I start to despair?
[6:52] What do I do when lust presents itself before me? And what do I do when bitterness keeps coming back over and over into my life?

What do I do? I believe I trust Jesus, but I struggle with these things. And it's not just popping up here and there, but there's this ongoing struggle.
And the ultimate question is, why do I continue to face defeat again and again and again? Can anybody relate to this?
It's a question we all ask. It's a question we all ask in different ways at different parts of our life.
Well, as I said, this morning's sermon is meant to be a practical sermon.
I am indebted to the many pastors who've come before me throughout history who have written on this subject. Their wisdom has been passed down through different sermons and commentaries to which I've put together this sermon.
[7:59] So my first point is we understand there's a battle, but the first point I want to make is how not to fight. How not to fight. Because here's the thing, you and I can have all the best intentions, but if we don't fight with wisdom and in the spirit, even our best intentions are not going to save us.

Right? So here are some ways, there's three ways that we attempt to put to death the deeds of the body. And I want to tell you why they will eventually fail.
First, it's to withdraw. To withdraw. Think of a monk who goes to live on a monastery. The desire of the monk at that time, which we largely see in Catholicism, is to get out of the world, get out of the flesh, get away from the things that might distract me on my life.
If I can get away from the world, the flesh, and Lord willing, the devil, I'm going to be okay. We kind of do this too in our community, right?
We form our own community. Sometimes we form our own schools. We send our kids only to Christian schools. We try to protect them along the way. Sometimes we want to own our own business.
[9:20] We don't want to associate. We only want a Christian boss. We start trying to create the environment. I think I told you once a few years ago, my friend preached at this church, and they asked him if he would come and basically lead their commune.

You know, this guy had bought this big piece of land out in the bush, and we're only going to be Christians there. And I was like, yeah, there's a whole bunch of problems with that. Now, make no mistake.

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There are times we need to put up boundaries and use wisdom. Sometimes it's good to have our kids in the schools that are Christians. Sometimes we need to remove them from the world for a time, but the whole idea is to train them to engage in the world.
And we're going to come to that, but here's the facts. Geographical distance does not clean the heart. Pride lives just as much in the city as it does in a Christian community.
And just because someone in front of you doesn't exist, we tend to still find our arguments, right? How many people here fight against politics, right?
[10:31] You know, we're at home. We get all festered up. We read the news. You know, that clown Trump, or I hate the Democrats, or what's Carney doing? You know, you start these arguments and nobody else is talking to you, but you let it all fester and it gets involved.

Well, Jesus tells us quite plainly the source of the evil in our hearts. In Mark 7, he says, hear me, all of you, and understand there is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him.
But the things that come out of a person is what defiles him. It's what's inside of us, our hurt. There's plenty of sin and misery in us.
And I'm losing his name, but one theologian, I think it might have been Jonathan Edwards, there's enough sin in one sentence spoken that can condemn the whole world. Here's the truth, and it's a tough one.
Sometimes God wants us in the tough circumstances of life. Sometimes he wants us there. Because often our circumstances expose what God wants us to work on.
[11:50] Right? I'm in a situation at work where I find my boss belittles me. My boss is unfair to me. Oftentimes, you know, if you always find yourself, no matter where you go, that's the trouble you're having.

Maybe it's a problem with submission. Maybe it's a problem with pride that's going on in your life, that God continues to bring that point. Because no matter where you go, you still seem to have the same problem.
And the problem is, our first instinct is to think, if I could only change the circumstances of my life. If I did so, holiness would follow. Obedience would come about.
And butterflies would surround me all the days of my life. Right? However, the way God works is he often calls us to obey him amongst people in situations that can prove very hard for us to manage. Even with people that can be difficult to love. Even with people that can be difficult to love. So to withdraw doesn't accomplish the task that we're looking for.
[13:02] The second thing, the second wrong way to fight is, it's to punish the flesh. And some people turn the battle into sin, into punishment of the body. They imagine that enough discomfort, deprivation, or exhaustion will make them holy.

I knew this friend way back, acquaintance, when I was in my 20s. You know, they had a lot of money. The first car they bought is, I remember they bought their first car.
But they didn't want, they didn't put air conditioning in it. Because they wanted to feel the heat so they wouldn't feel prideful for having that car. Right? And I remember they didn't like it, obviously. So when they sold it, nobody else wanted to buy it off them. Because it had no air conditioning. Right? They're just doing these things. So Paul says that we're put the deeds of the body to death. Notice he doesn't say, he doesn't command us to kill or injure the body. The fact is, God created our bodies. Christ died for our bodies.
[14:05] He purchased it. And as we learned in Romans 8, the Spirit will raise our bodies. So the enemy is sin's misuse of God's good gifts.

Paul warns us against this in Colossians 2.23. Let me read it for you. He says, these things have indeed an appearance of wisdom. Of promoting self-made religion and asceticism.
And that asceticism means to pull yourself out. To be clean in a dirty world. And the severity of the body. That's to beat your body. But they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.
Many people consider George Whitefield the greatest preacher who ever lived. He was a Methodist preacher from England who came to the New England colonies in the 17th century.
And he traveled up and down from Boston area down to Georgia. In fact, Benjamin Franklin who was not a believer but would listen to him as much as he could.
[15:12] He thought he was the greatest preacher that he ever could. But one of the things that George Whitefield do, he would fast so much that he ended up injuring his body.

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To the point that he'd always have to go back home to rest and recuperate. This excessive asceticism ended up forcing him to drop out of university.
And many believe that is the cause of his death. He just had a weak body. The fact is, a person may deny himself food and fast upon his own interest.
But here's the thing. Fasting can serve prayer. Self-denial can serve obedience. But neither suffering nor discomfort purchases the cleansing that our hearts need.
The question is whether we are turning from sin to God in the faith. And all too often when we create these rules for ourself, pride ends up growing on account of the type of denial rather than the humility that Christ means to create within us.
[16:30] The last one is legalism. Legalism. Now, we talk about this a lot. The reason why is because it's all over the place.

Even in areas we do not know, legalism is seductive and it is prevalent in the modern day church.
What this means is we replace God's commands with a collection of rules and convictions.
And then we measure our holiness by our success or failures in keeping the rules that we've designed. You with me on that? We've created these rules.
And these rules get elevated to truth. Now, the reality is sometimes we need hard lines. And we do need guidance and boundaries to keep us from sin.
But there's a few things we need to remember when we form our own convictions. Our own convictions are exactly that. Our own convictions.
[17:33] We're not to judge others by their convictions. If that is their issue, what they're dealing with, it's not yours. Often some people will judge others.

Oh, they don't share that. They go to movies. I think I told you the story where when I was in seminary, there was this church was trying to...
They've invited me to apply for the role. And then they told me, wow, you know, we never go to movies. We're so united. I'm sorry, man. It's not... I go to movies. What? Our conviction is we don't go to movies.
Hey, that's fine for you, but it's not fine for me. Number two, whatever restrictions you have, that is not what places you in good standing with God.
Right? Whatever convictions you have or restrictions you have, that's not what gives you your standing with God. And it's to know that your convictions and laws may protect you, but they don't save you.
[18:41] They don't save you. Mark 7, verse 6 and 7, Jesus said, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. Now let me explain another part of this world of legalism.
I grew up in a world of legalism. It's not these were bad people. These were people who loved Jesus. So please hear me.
That I'm not saying they weren't believers or had good motivations, but there were certain behaviors and practices that were expected upon you. And that oftentimes parents would teach their children the right behaviors, but would expect the children to follow in the flesh.
Right? There's only so much you can do in the flesh. And what was interesting, we had a pretty good youth group. And I can say today, if I looked at, I think it was 15 or 16, not many are truly walking with the Lord anymore.
[19:53] And I often get these calls or a Facebook post from someone that I grew up with, and we talk about some of these things. And it's not that they don't believe anymore, and it's not like they reject the teachings of Jesus, but they reject the lifestyle of their parents.

They reject the lifestyle that the church created. And in many ways, I don't blame them. Because all too often, they saw their parents were dedicated with their rules to what was in effect a joyless religion.
It was a joyless religion. Their parents would act like tyrants about their conduct. They were told to conform or go to hell.
Some were taught to be introspective over every thought and every action, and all it created was fear. And let me just say now, if your relationship with God is predicated upon not having to go to hell, I'm sincerely sorry.

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Jesus Christ offers so much more. Make no mistake, hell is real. But the peace and union that we can have with the Son of God, the Son of the Creator, have the Spirit dwell within us, is of far greater value and benefit.
[21:20] And I remember inviting a non-Christian friend to camp. They were in a different cabin, and I remember that night, some of the kids at camp, and we're in youth camp, so probably 16, 17, 18, around that age.

And this friend was mortified, scared to death, because they were talking to her about hell. She grew up in a completely non-Christian background.
So everybody thought, well, we have a non-Christian in our midst. Let's just tell them about hell. You know, mortified. She was mortified. I remember she was shaking that night.
You know, did the people mean well? Yes, they did. But they were foolish in their application. They were mistaught. And then, throughout that time, her view of my faith was, one, that I had to tell her, that's not what I believe.
I believe it, but that's not the focus of what I want you to understand. I want you to understand that you can be loved by the Lord who rules on high.
[22:30] You see, if your kids only see the misery of your life because you are overly introspective, and there is no celebration in your life for what Christ has done, your children will look for something better.

They will. Because what you taught them about Christianity isn't true. And they're confused. Here's the truth.
You may avoid certain entertainment and still might be cruel to your family. You might keep an impressive devotional schedule, but resent anyone who interrupts you.
You can have all these wonderful convictions, but if these convictions keep you from enjoying true fellowship with the body of believers, you've lost the point.
The plot. You see, God's law reveals His holy will and God's Spirit teaches us to delight in it. Amen? To delight in His law.
[23:46] Legalism takes our performance and makes it a claim upon God's acceptance. What I mean by that is God will only accept me if I abide by these convictions.

And sadly, that is what destroys the gospel. I know many of you have lived that same life. You've been in those legalistic situations.
And if this is you now as a parent, the truth is it's not too late to confess and repent. If you're someone who grew up with such parents, I pray that you can forgive them.
I pray that you will not let bitterness come into your heart. Oftentimes, they did not know any better. They were genuinely trying to please the Lord.
In fact, my mom yesterday confessed to her family, she's sorry for not letting me go out on Halloween when it was on a Sunday. Right?
[24:53] Oftentimes, they feared man more than God and it affects their parenting. So my plea to you is do not allow that bitterness to take root in your heart.

What's interesting is these wrong approaches have something in common. They all place the power in us and not in the Spirit. It's what on all what we can do rather than what the Spirit does.
And we need to remember whose presence we are discussing. The Spirit is a divine person who loves us and makes us holy.
So, now that we know what not to do, what do we do? What do we do? Well, let's take a look at the first thing. So let's, I entitled this, Take the Fight to Sin.
Take the Fight to Sin. The first thing, the first thing we need to do is we need to begin with our minds. We know we're at war. We learned that last week. There's a war. But you need to prepare, right?
[26:00] Any soldier who doesn't prepare for battle gets out. He's only got enough ammunition to last one dogfight. And all of a sudden, he's like, uh-oh, I gotta run back. Right? So, one.

Here's the first thing. Recognize that sin still remains in you. Recognize that sin still remains in you. That's why Paul says in Romans 7, 21, I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.
Right? Both are true. Paul wants to obey God, and the sin power still resists him. We know that Christ has broken sin's dominion, but sin has not disappeared.

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The reality is you cannot fight what you refuse to acknowledge. And that doesn't mean you say, hey, no one's perfect. No one's perfect, right?
Here's the other thing. It's really easy to admit we're a sinner. Right? Everybody admits they're a sinner. Yeah, yeah, I'm a sinner. I'm a sinner. But you know what's not easy to admit? That I'm prideful.
[27:07] It's not easy to admit that I'm foolish. It's not easy to admit that I don't forgive easy.

Right? The fact of the matter is, when we get specific with sin, we get defensive. When someone brings a specific sin in your life, saying, hey, we see a disconnect between what you say you are and what you're doing, we don't like that.
We push back against those type of things. Right? We tend to confess that sin that remains while defending the very place it hides.
David provides an excellent example for us in what to do. Psalm 139 verse 23 says, Search me, O God, and know my heart, and see if there's any grievous way in me.
Lord, expose what I am overlooking and what I am excusing. That's the plea. If we're in that position to say, hey, man, there's no sin going on.
[28:21] I've got it all under control. You see, then, when the Word is faithfully, exposes our sin, it corrects our sin, and sometimes we need to listen more before we begin defending ourselves.

So our first attitude is to recognize our sin, name it honestly, and take God's side against it. All right?
So the first one is know and understand that you have sin. Number two, understand your spiritual position. Second way to deal with sin is to understand your spiritual position. We must recognize that the sin that remains, but also remember what God has given us.
2 Peter 2 tells us His divine power has granted to us, granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.
What he's telling us is God has not called you to fight without supplying what you need to fight. You're not on your own. Martin Lloyd-Jones makes the point that we often become discouraged because we forget who we are as Christians.
[29:42] What is our identity in Christ? Notice the verse today we started with. Verse 12 says, So then, brothers, sisters, those of us who are of the faith.

That's what he's talking to. We are in the family. We belong to Christ, and His Spirit lives within us. And Peter says, we have become partakers of the divine nature.
We have received a new life from God. That new life has new desires and a new capacity to obey them. You might have tried fighting against it when you're in the flesh.
You recognize it was no good for you, but now you've got someone with you. And remember our point from last week. We don't fight alone. So when temptation comes, remember it's to say, I belong to Christ.
His Spirit dwells in me, and by His power I obey. The battle is real, but so is what Jesus Christ gives us.
[30:52] Amen? Amen? The third attitude to have going into battle is to remember that sin grieves the Holy Spirit. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit.

Paul writes to us in Ephesians 4.30, Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. The truth is, our sin grieves the one who dwells within us.
We've already learned that the Holy Spirit lives within a believer. It's not taking off. When we sin, we're including them in that sin, right? Martin Lloyd-Jones adds, We can become so concerned about how miserable sin makes us that we overlook what it means to God.
It's easy to say, I feel guilty. I'm disappointed in myself. I hate the consequences. And those concerns are understandable, but what I'm asking you is that our sorrow must go deeper.
It's to ask, Am I grieving only over what sin does to me, or am I grieving because I sinned against a just and holy God? For the Spirit who dwells within us is holy, and He loves us, and He works to make us like Christ.
[32:24] And our bitterness, our impurity, our deceit grieves Him. So remember, when temptation comes, it's how can I willingly entertain what grieves the one who's made His home in me?

Love for Him should move us to fight. Fourth attitude is to keep the ultimate goal in mind. To keep the ultimate goal in mind.

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1 John 3, John tells us that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is. And then He draws the practical conclusion.
And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. On a wedding day, does the bride say, Hey, hey, I'm going to go hike up the chief today, and I'll see you at two.
Right? I'm going to go ride my horse. Of course not. That's the day you're purifying yourself. Right? You're putting the best on. We need to live with that idea that Christ is coming.
[33:41] We will see Him. We will be made like Him. Our moral bodies will be raised. So, but, but, all too often we live as if this world is everything, right?

So, we want to satisfy that desire now. I want to win this argument now. I want to get my own way now. And we think that that matters.
what John's telling us is it doesn't lift your eyes. Remember who you belong and where you are ultimately going.
You belong to the family of God. Your future is with Christ. So, when temptation comes, bring the future into the present, right? I am going to be like my Savior.
Why would I nurture what makes me unlike Him? And the fifth attitude we need to adopt is we need to focus on our calling.
[34:51] Focus on our calling. In 2 Peter 1.10, Peter writes, give diligence to make your calling and election sure for if you do these things you shall never fall, right?

What things? He's just talked about virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection and love.
God calls us to cultivate these things. Notice the word diligently. Diligently. Give diligence to work at it, to press into it, to work hard at it.
See, we don't make ourselves elect by obeying for our growing obedience confirms the reality of His work in us and that proves to strengthen our assurance.
But if you are troubled by repeated failure, my question to you is, are you cultivating what God commands in us or for us?
[36:02] Galatians 5 simply says, walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the delus of the flesh. Notice that term walking, it means to be moving, going forward.

Those are steps of obedience to take and this brings us to a practical question. I've got those attitudes. So what actions do I take?
What actions? How's the fight? How are we going to fight? So now we're on to my third point, which is take action against your sin. We've considered what we must remember now.
We need to let those truths govern us. Paul says, if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
So we know that the Spirit supplies the power, we must act in dependence upon him. So what does that look like? One, stop sinning. Stop sinning.
[37:05] That's the first point, right? Stop the sinful practice. 1 Peter 2.11 says, abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul.

Stop it. Any guys remember the old Bob Newhart comedian? You know, when he used to be a counselor and people come in and there's this kid he says, man, someone says, I got all these problems, we're going to need some time.
He goes, I can deal with this in 10 seconds. They come in and tell him the problem and he just simply says, stop it. What about my mom? Stop it. There is no, just stop it.
Fact is, if you're lying, tell the truth. if you're gossiping, stop passing the story along. If you are maintaining an immoral relationship, end it.
Fact is, all too often we complicate things, right? We try to figure out, why am I tempted this way? Is it because something my dad said when I was four or maybe it was something that I ate, right?
[38:16] We start to try to go into, why do I do these things, right? Man, anybody who's been hangry knows it, right? Hangry, I just remember the other day, man, I was irritated.

I was irritated at home. And yes, I was hungry, but that doesn't let me off of the excuse of how I act when I don't get my way.
The fact is, we think too much often to the detriment of our obedience. Now, don't hear me. I'm not saying that understanding the root of your sin is a bad thing.
But when God gives us a clear command to obey, obey. You may still feel the desire, the habit may resist you, so continue to pray and refuse to obey it.

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That's why Paul says in Romans 6, 12, let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions. Sin will make demands, but you're not obligated to comply.
[39:33] Number two, right? First one, stop it. Number two, stop what feeds it. Stop what feeds it. Romans 13, 14 says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

That word provision means supplying what something needs. Don't give it the gas that keeps it running. We sometimes ask God to deliver us from a sin while carefully preserving everything that feeds that sin.
sin. We pray against lust while keeping the same unrestricted access on the internet. We pray against bitterness while replaying the injury and gathering fresh evidence against the person.
We pray against gossip while encouraging the conversations to continue. you. So the question is, what are you supplying that helps your sin survive?
Be specific. Sometimes a device might need to leave the bedroom, a conversation or a relationship may need to end, and oftentimes a trusted believer needs to know what you're struggling with.
[40:59] I don't know about you guys, but I was there when the internet went high speed. Internet went high speed, if you remember AOL and all that kind of stuff, and I remember my first email program.

You could plug in a subject and it would find people discussing a subject, and you could just put in baseball listserv and put into this thing, and I could talk. I had conversations with real major league managers, you know, just debating certain things.
I loved it, and one time I spelled something wrong and wrong pitchers showed up on my internet, right? I'm young, I'm single at that time, that is tempting beyond all temptation, so I had to take action, so I actually got rid of the high speed and went back to dial-up, right?
If I wanted that sin, I was going to have to wait four hours to see it, right? But the fact is, the safeguard doesn't change our hearts.
There's wisdom to protect ourselves, but a heart that wants to obey God should be willing to accept a safeguard, should be willing to accept accountability.
[42:10] that means not fighting for your freedom or your individualism, but we need help sometimes. That's why we exist as a church, not just because it's more fun to sing together in a big group.

We need to give our lives over to people who can help walk us through those sins that have enslaved us, that we struggle and we just can't get rid of and we do need someone that reminds us that we belong to Christ.
Because when we're in that pit of sin or that temptation comes, we don't always have someone say, hey, you love Jesus, man. You love Jesus. He lives in you.
You're his. You can resist. You don't do that, right? Then you can shut it, you can close your mouth, you can do whatever not continue. In that sin. That is why the church exists.
Third action is fight the sin as soon as it shows up. Fights the sin as soon as it shows up. James 1, 14 says he describes how sinful desires draw us away.
[43:26] It gives birth to sin and finally brings forth debt. There's this progression that happens with sin, right? We imagine, we have this imagination, we think about some stuff, and then we figure out excuses why we need that sin.

Right? We need excuses. Man, I ate too much. My spouse doesn't love me.
I was really treated badly in a certain situation, so I need these things. It doesn't have to be physical. It can be the overeating.
It can be anything that we use, any excuse, and then we begin planning for that sin. And once we've started the planning process, it's really hard to stop the process.
Like, when you've had the plan of what you're going to do, no matter what sin it is, you know what, I'm going to call this person and talk to them, because man, we love to judge together, right?
[44:34] We work well together. Fact is, we need to learn to act earlier. At the first invitation to nurse resentment, turn against it, right?

At the desire to enjoy someone else's humiliation, refuse to feed it, or when your eyes encounter something tempting, look away before you settle in and enjoy it.
Reality is, being tempted does not mean you have sinned. Christ was tempted and remained sinless. But by deliberately welcoming and cultivating sinful desire is always a matter of the heart,

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even before an outward action follows.
it's the thought by which the action follows. You've got to kill it at the thought. See, the fact of the matter is, lust invites you to treat another person as something for your consumption.
Bitterness promises satisfaction through keeping an injury alive or pride tells you that you're important and your importance must be defended at all costs.
[46:04] The fact is, we need to expose the lie. We need to remember who we belong to. We need to pray for help and then we need to take the next obedient step.

See, the fact is, Scripture gives you truth to believe. Prayer expresses our dependence upon him and both belong in the actual moment of resistance.
If you don't know your word and you're not in prayer, you do not have the best tools to fight the temptation. The fourth piece of advice I have for you is to discipline yourself for obedience.
Discipline yourself for obedience. If you're familiar with 1 Corinthians 9, Paul compares the Christian life to athletic training. An athlete exercises self-control because there is a goal worth pursuing.
Many of us know Olympic athletes, they're not there simply because they're talented, they have some natural form of talent, but what separates them from all of us is the dedication to that task, the willingness to say no.
[47:22] I think I told you the story growing up with a friend from high school and acquaintance, he was drafted to the NHL and there was a particular girl in our district who was very pretty and she was training for the Olympics and she did go to the Olympics in 94 and he thought, hey, I'm me, I can get her to go with me to our graduation banquet.

He asked her, hey, I'm me, man, I'm going NHL and she said no. I got a train on that day and sure enough she ended up marrying a pro NHL athlete and her son's now an NHL athlete but go figure. It wouldn't have happened if she had gone with the first guy. You see, when we care for our body, which means we govern its appetites, food, sleep, recreation and comfort are good gifts and we are to receive them gratefully but none of them should master us.
If we habitually give ourselves to whatever we want, whenever we want, we get indulgent and we need to practice obedience.
A few things the way we do this, right? Fulfill the responsibility you'd rather avoid. put down the distraction when someone needs your attention. Keep your word when doing so becomes inconvenience.
[48:56] The fact is, ordinary decisions are opportunity to practice faithfulness. And give deliberate attention to the means God uses or gives us to strengthen us.

Read your word. Take time to understand it. Meditate upon it. What does it reveal about God? What does it reveal about our desires?
What does it reveal about our responsibilities? Do more than just simply finish a chapter and say, done. There's nothing magical in reading your Bible.
It's when you actually take your time and meditate. What is this saying? What does it say about God? What does it say about me? What does it say about sin? What must I believe in?
What must I obey? The fact is, I encourage you to pray before a familiar crisis.
[49:58] Ask for patience before you know if the conversation is going to be hard. Ask for purity when you're alone. gather with the church.

Receive correction. Receive encouragement. And let other believers help you remain watchful. These practices by themselves do not give us God's favor, but they are wisdom that allows us to live in God's favor.
Amen? Here's my last point. when you fall, repent and return. 1 John 1 9 says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
Do you get the weight of that verse? It's not reminding you. It's not, I told you so. It's done. It's done. It's done.
[51:05] Well, dad, do I need to punish? Do I need to stay outside in the dark more and continue gardening into late hours to make up for whatever I did wrong? Of course not. Come in, sit down, dinner, enjoy the fellowship that we have with one another.

Too often, when we do fall, we often say, well, everyone does it, right? No big deal. Could have been worse.
Or, we despair. Man, I was defeated. I'm always defeated. Nothing has changed.

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Why do I even bother fighting? Two words, two points. One, take your sins seriously. Two, take God's promises seriously.
Confess what you actually did. Lord, I lied because I want your approval. I spoke cruelly because I wanted to hurt that person.
[52:14] I fed that desire because in that moment, I wanted it more than obedience. See, when you have wronged someone, acknowledge it to them.

seek forgiveness, make restitution, accept the consequences without demanding that trust be restored immediately. Then examine your failure.
What did you excuse? What opportunity did you preserve? And where did you begin to consent? repent.
Let repentance produce a change in how you approach the next temptation. But do not make yourself wait outside the door of mercy until you have suffered enough.
The fact is, Christ's blood is sufficient for your sin. You have just confessed. Come on in. Come on in. Let me conclude with this thought.
[53:24] Cultivate what pleases your father. This is the final thing we need to remember. God has not only made us his children, but he's making us like his son.

Right? We reach out to God because of a relationship. We don't reach out to him because it's a habit I don't like. Colossians 3 tells us to put sin to death and then put on compassion, kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love.
So the fact is, we need to ask two questions. One, what must I put off? And two, what must I put on? Put away angry speech and learn to answer patiently.
Refuse gossip and use your words to protect and encourage. Turn from greed and practice generosity. Resist pride and serve someone whose gratitude may never happen.
but more importantly, let the word of Christ dwell richly within you. Pray to the spirit to shape your desires as well as your conduct and set your heart upon becoming someone whose life honors Christ and blesses the people around you.
[54:57] the fact is we fight because Christ has made us his own. Amen? We fight with the resources his spirit supplies and we fight toward the day when we will see our savior and be made like him.

Until then, we must obey. Buy the spirit, put sin to death, and cultivate the holiness for which Christ has set you free.
Let's pray. Dear Lord, just as we take an overall view of these verses that are found in your scriptures, oh Lord, I pray that we would take them to heart, that these just simply aren't my pieces of advice, these are not my pieces of wisdom that are very easy to ignore, but this is your wisdom. And what's amazing about you is you just haven't let us be. You are intimately involved with us. Father, I pray first and foremost that we pray after you in order to seek your face, oh Lord, to know your character, to know your nature, to know this love that you have for us.
Father, that is a driving thing. It's beautiful. It makes us in awe of you.
[56:39] Lord, I pray if there's any particular aspect to this sermon has spoken to someone here, Father, I pray that you would continue to use it. I pray it wouldn't be a thought that was simply in their head now and to be forgotten when they leave.

I pray that you would use your spirit to nag them, to deal with it, to seek the help they need, to perhaps make an appointment with Dave to talk about some of those areas of our lives that do influence our behaviors.
Yes, how we grew up, what was modeled before us, some of the hurts we've expressed, some of the expectations that were not met. Even some of our current predicaments are hard, they are tough, but you asked us to place our burdens on you.
It's one thing just to acknowledge these verses, Lord, but sometimes it's difficult to put them into action. I pray that we would continue to speak out, to seek out, and to desire to experience the love of another who can walk with us in this walk of faith.
We love you, O Lord, and we submit ourselves to you. Father, I ask that you would sincerely hear our confessions and bring us to a right relationship with you.
[58:22] In your most holy and precious name, amen.

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