

Lesson Eleven
Colossians 3:5-9
An Improper Outfit

The apostle Paul understood that sound doctrine must always move beyond theory and find solid application in the life of the believer. In his letter to the Colossians, he often employed strong word pictures so that they would fully grasp and then apply the spiritual truths being taught. Consider the phrase *put to death your members* found in Colossians 3:5. This certainly caught their attention, but Paul wasn't advocating a literal surgery because sin does not come from a particular body part, it begins within the heart. Consider the story of a pickpocket in England centuries ago. He was convicted and his right hand was cut off. He was then convicted a second time and his left hand was also removed. This man lost both hands and still continued his thievery by using his teeth! The truth is, there can be no holiness where sin is allowed to run unchecked. We must put sin to death by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to help us fight it, not by mutilating our bodies.

The believers battle with sin is ongoing. Though Christians are free from the penalty of sin, they can still be ensnared by its attractions. While it's true that believers are new creations in Christ, this does not mean that they are instantly mature. True maturity comes as sinful practices such as those listed in Colossians 3:8 are put off. Paul used this phrase that depicts the way filthy and tattered clothing is discarded to illustrate properly disposed of sin. Bible commentator Warren Wiersbe describes these sins as *grave* clothes that need to be replaced with *grace* clothes. How exciting it is to know that, in the Lord, we can possess a beautiful new wardrobe that will always be stylish while allowing others to see Christ in us.

Day One – Dirty Wardrobe
Read Colossians 3:5-7

1. The phrase *put to death your members* was a common figure of speech used by Paul in order to exhort believers to eliminate everything in their lives that was contrary to godliness. What picture does this strongly worded phrase paint in your mind?

2. There can be no true holiness or spiritual maturity where sin is allowed to remain. List the sins in verse 5 that we are told to eradicate.

3. The list given in Colossians 3:5 are sins that reflect a perversion of real love and an ungodly use of our sexuality. How we use our sexuality is highly important to God. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, we read of His desire for us to remain pure. What is His will according to these verses?

a. How does this differ from what you see portrayed in the media and popular culture of today?

b. Can you think of some reasons why sexual purity has come under such great attack?

c. How have you personally been affected by society's influence?

4. Believers often wonder why sin is so alluring and why they continue to struggle with a particular temptation over and over again. Read Mark 7:21-23 and James 1:12-15 and summarize in your own words the answer to this dilemma.

5. Jesus has paid the penalty for our sin and set us free, but sins' residual influence in our lives can still be potent. How does Paul describe his personal struggle in Romans 7:14-25?

a. Are you able to relate to what Paul describes? Share your thoughts.

Day Two – Wrong Living

Read Colossians 3:5-7

1. There is an intense battle within our society that seeks to destroy God’s blueprint for purity. Use the following exhortations from scripture to write specific ways that you can protect yourself.

Sin	Scripture	Practical Application
Uncleanness; unclean in a moral sense, lustful, sensual living	Romans 6:13	
Passion: depraved passions Evil desire: wicked cravings	2 Corinthians 10:3-5	
Covetousness: the greedy desire to have more or to have something other than what God has provided	Ephesians 5:1-3	
Idolatry: the worship of false gods that secures the obedience and love that belongs to God; idolatry dethrones God from the soul	Psalms 119:9-11	

2. Christians are to be the light of the world according to Matthew 5:14. Suggest some practical ways that believers can influence others around them to remain sexually pure.

3. The list of sins in Colossians 3:5 culminate with covetousness, which is idolatry. Why do you think that Paul links these two sins together?

a. How can covetousness and idolatry relate to sexual purity?

b. How does Colossians 3:6 let us know that God takes this topic seriously?

4. The wrath of God is a fearful subject. Thankfully, the Bible offers hope for all who will put their trust in Jesus. What encouragement is found in the following verses?

Romans 5:8-9

Romans 8:1

1 Thessalonians 5:9

5. As believers we are held to a high standard, but praise be to the Lord who imparts His righteousness to us through His Son Jesus! Meditate on this truth and then end this day by writing a prayer that reflects something that He has revealed to you in today's lesson.

"Sin forsaken is one of the best evidences of sin forgiven." J.C. Ryle

Day Three – Clean Out That Closet!

Read Colossians 3:8-9

1. Colossians 3:5 commands believers to put to death specific sins in their lives. In Colossians 3:8-9, we are exhorted to put off behaviors that are reflective of our old nature. Why is it important to do away with our old man according to Ephesians 4:22?

2. The phrase *put off* can be likened to physically disrobing; in other words, we're to cast aside the actions of our old nature just as if they were inappropriate or undesirable clothes. What actions are to be stripped off according to Colossians 3:8-9?

a. How would you categorize these sins?

3. Take a moment to think about your own wardrobe. What causes you to discard clothes from your closet? In what ways can you relate this to Paul's exhortation in Colossians?

4. In Colossians 3:8-9, Paul commands believers to abandon individual sins that directly affect how we communicate with one another. Use a dictionary to help you understand these speech patterns that must be removed.

Anger:

Wrath:

Malice:

Blasphemy:

Filthy Language:

Lying:

a. Which of these have you struggled with most recently? Describe the situation.

b. If you had chosen to speak differently, how might the outcome have been different?

Day Four – Attractive Speech
Read Colossians 3:8-9

Yesterday’s lesson wrapped up with discussing the negative manifestations of the tongue. Today we will continue the discussion of the tongue and its effects.

1. The tongue may be small, but it is powerful! Read James 3:2-10 and write your observations and thoughts about this little member.

2. In contrast to the picture painted in James, scripture also shows us how we can bless others with our words. What encouragement can you gain from the following verses?

Proverbs 16:24

Proverbs 25:11

Ephesians 4:29

1 Thessalonians 5:11

3. What we focus our thoughts on sifts down into our hearts and then naturally spills out into our conversation. How will practicing the commands found in Proverbs 4:23-24 and Philippians 4:8 help you to put off unwholesome speech?

4. If those closest to you were asked to rate your conversations from the last week, how would they do so?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Harsh, critical, sarcastic So-So Uplifting & encouraging

a. How would you like your words to be remembered by others?

5. As we come to the realization that the tearing down of others with our tongues is revolting to the Lord, our hearts should break. Use the words of Psalm 19:14 and Psalm 141:3 to write a personal commitment to the Lord to use your tongue as a blessing and as a fountain of life to others.

“God set a double fence before the tongue, the teeth and the lips, to teach us to be wary that we offend not with our tongue.” Thomas Watson

