

October 1, 2006 by Steve Brandon



# Put Off Your Sin

## Colossians 3:8-11

1. Six Sins to Put Off (verses 8-9a)
2. A Reason to Put Them Off (verses 9b-10)
3. No Barriers to Putting Them Off (verse 11)

This morning, we will be looking at Colossians, chapter 3:8-11. Like last week, the text deals with the issue of our sanctification, that is, how we ought to live as believers in Christ. Please consider the text:

Colossians 3:8-11

But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, [and] abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its [evil] practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him --[a renewal] in which there is no [distinction between] Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

My message this morning is entitled, "Put Off Your Sin." I get this title from the first phrase in verse 8, "But now you also, put them all aside." The idea here is a bit like undressing after a hard day of work on the farm. You have fed the cows and the pigs. You have scooped out their manure. You have spent the afternoon riding on a tractor through the dusty fields. And when you finally come home, your garments are filled with sweat, dirt, grime, and the smell of pig. As you come into your house, the first thing that you do is to remove your clothes, and "put them all aside." You set them on the washer to be washed. As for yourself, you climb into the shower and freshen up for dinner.

This is what Paul is saying. He says that there are certain sins that are like stains on your clothes. You need to remove these clothes from your body. You need to set them aside. You need to shower in the blood of Christ. Perhaps a picture might help. I have a pair of shorts here that I have had for a long time. Through years of usage, they have become quite raggedy. I now use them whenever I paint or whenever I put myself in a situation where I will become exceptionally dirty. These clothes can be a picture of our lives. Through our sin, we are stained and soiled and ripped and ugly. I have here another pair of shorts that are fairly new. They haven't been soiled through abusive activity. I have never used these when painting or working outside in the garden. In fact, these shorts are really my "dress-up shorts" that I use when I need to look nice.

In verse 8, Paul is telling us to put aside the old, dirty, grimy shorts, and to put on the new shorts. In fact, if you look down in verses 9 and 10, we see the metaphor being used. "Do not lie to one another, since you **laid aside** the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col. 3:9-10).

We have laid aside the old self. We have put on the new self. We have laid aside the filthy, soiled shorts. We have put on the new, clean shorts. So, don't go working in the garden again, where your new shorts will become soiled. Don't go painting your house, as your shorts will be stained by the paint. Don't go shoveling manure anymore. That is the picture we have. Hopefully this picture will help you to see what Paul is calling us to do. He's calling us to lay aside the sinful practices. He's telling us to put on the righteous practices. In verse 12, we see the righteous practices that we need to put on. "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on** a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience ..." (Col. 3:12).

Let's look at my first point, ...

### 1. Six Sins to Put Off (verses 8-9a)

We read, beginning in verse 8, "But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another." These are six sins that the Lord has given us to depart from. Last week, we saw five sins that should be removed from us: "Immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed." These were all sins of selfishness. They focused upon your own desires. They were motivated by a passion in your heart to have something that will give you pleasure. That pleasure may come in the form of sexual pleasure or material things of this world. The sins that Paul lists for us in verses 8 and 9 are a bit different. Rather than being self-centered sins, they are centered upon others. You might call them "social sins." They deal with your heart toward other people. They deal with what you say to other people. They get at your intentions toward other people.

Like last week, I want to spend a few moments defining these words for you and then attempt to dig a bit deeper into the evil of such sins.

### Some definitions

#### Anger

Anger is the sin of an internal hostility toward others. It describes a burning of the heart that is against another person. It's

like smoldering coals upon a fire. It's a settled animosity toward another person.

### **Wrath**

The word wrath describes the sudden, passionate, outburst of temper that is most often directed toward another person. It is difficult to distinguish this word from anger. You might look at it this way: if anger describes the burning coals, then wrath describes the flame that raises up and gives forth its light and heat. Wrath is the outward expression of anger toward another person. My wife and I experienced a good illustration of this last night. Some friends of our had some tickets to the Rockford Symphony Orchestra and brought us along as their guests. If you know me, you know that I'm music stupid. So, during the performance, questions were coming into my mind about what I'm seeing and what I'm listening to. I'm making sure that I'm whispering to her very quietly so that I don't disturb anybody around me. And this lady behind us says in a loud voice for all those around her to hear, "Do you know how rude those two people are? They keep putting their heads together and I can't see." For the rest of the performance, each of us sat straight up in our chair, feeling the wrath of this woman. When the intermission came, we turned and apologized to this woman. It took me about three or four times of saying, "I'm sorry," until she finally acknowledge it and accepted our apology. It put a damper on the performance, as I would have preferred to ask Yvonne my questions and share my observations with her. You can only imagine the anger and wrath that was welling up inside of here. Certainly, she was stewing for quite some time before she would make such a statement in a quiet audience.

### **Malice**

Malice is a heart of hatred toward another person. This word describes the intention of the heart to harm or injure another person. It describes a cruel intent toward others.

### **Slander**

The Greek word for slander is blasphemian (blasphemion), from which we get the term, "blaspheme." It describes evil speech, with a particular reference to speaking against God. When directed toward other people, the idea here is that you present them in an unfavorable light.

### **Abusive speech**

In other versions, this word is translated "filthy language" (NIV, NKJV) or "filthy communication" (KJV). It is referring to speech that is sour and not edifying. It may be speech that is harmful to others. It may be speech that expresses moral filth.

### **Lying**

The term used for lying is the Greek word, yeudo (pseudo), from which we get the word, "pseudo," which means "fake." It is the opposite of truth. It simply means, "falsehood" or "error." It describes words that are not true.

This list that Paul gives is amazingly similar to the one given by Solomon in Proverbs 6, ...

### **Proverbs 6:16-19**

There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers

We see the anger and wrath of men in "shedding innocent blood." We see the malice in "a heart that devised wicked plans." We see slander and abusive speech of men in "spreading strife among brothers." We see lying several times: The LORD hates "a lying tongue" and "a false witness." In fact, the Proverbs are full of exhortations to keep away from these things, as they often result in destruction for your soul. Let's look at what Proverbs says about these terms.

### **Wisdom from Proverbs**

#### **Anger**

"Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man, or you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself" (Prov. 22:24-25). In other words, stay far away from anger and from angry people. For you might learn their anger and find a share for yourself.

#### **Wrath**

"Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit" (Prov. 26:28). In other words, just as a city without walls cannot be defended and will fall into certain ruin, so also will be the man who can't control his spirit, and let's his emotions run out of control.

#### **Malice**

"Do not devise harm against your neighbor, while he lives securely beside you. Do not contend with a man without cause, if he has done you no harm. Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways. For the devious are an abomination to the LORD; ... The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked" (Prov. 3:29-33). Should you have evil intent upon others, your sin will find you out.

#### **Slander**

"A worthless man digs up evil, while his words are like scorching fire. A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends" (Prov. 16:27-28). "He who spreads slander is a fool" (Prov. 10:18).

### **Abusive Speech**

"A worthless person, a wicked man, is the one who walks with a perverse mouth, ... who with perversity in his heart continually devises evil, who spreads strife. ... Therefore his calamity will come suddenly; instantly he will be broken and there will be no healing" (Prov. 6:12, 14-15). If hurtful words come from your mouth, calamity will come upon you.

### **Lying**

"A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will not escape" (Prov. 19:5). (Four verses later the same thing is repeated). "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will perish" (Prov. 19:9). The point is clear: you can't lie and get away with it. You will face the consequences.

You simply cannot practice these any of these things and expect to prosper. The Bible is full of illustrations of those who have been characterized by these attitudes and actions and have met their destruction as a result of it.

## **Wisdom from Failures in the Bible**

### **Anger and Wrath**

There are many people in the Scriptures who were described as being angry. All of their anger ultimately accomplished nothing. *Cain* was angry at his brother Abel, who offered up to God an acceptable sacrifice (Gen. 4:5). In his wrath, he killed his brother. What did it get him? He received a curse from God, who told him, "You will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth" (Gen. 4:12).

*Saul* was angry with David, the anointed one of God. On several occasions, his wrath stirred him to attempt to kill him with a spear (1 Sam. 18:18; 1 Sam. 19:10). He attempted to kill David as he slept (1 Sam. 19:15). On several occasions, Saul pursued David into the wilderness with his army to kill him (1 Sam. 23; 26). When Jonathan sided with David, "Saul's anger burned" (1 Sam. 20:30). And what did it get him? He died in battle as a disgraced leader. The Philistines, "cut off his head and stripped off his weapons, and sent them throughout the land of the Philistines" (1 Sam. 31:9). They also placed his body up on the wall of Beth-shan to be publicly disgraced by all who would happen to see it.

### **Malice**

*Haman* was filled with malice against the Jews. He attempted to have all of them killed. He manipulated the king into writing a decree that all of the Jewish people scattered throughout all of the provinces of the kingdom of Persia be killed (Esther 3:8-10). On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, all who were in Persia were "to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children ... and to seize their possessions as plunder" (Esther 3:13).

What did it get Haman? He was humbled, in being forced to give great honor to Mordecai, a Jewish man whom Haman hated with a passion. He was forced to clothe Mordecai with a royal robe, and to placing a royal crown upon his head, and to set him upon a royal horse that the king had ridden, to parade him on horseback through the city square, proclaiming, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor" (Esther 6:6-9). Eventually, Haman was hanged on the very gallows that he had constructed to use in the hanging of Mordecai (Esther 7:10).

### **Slander**

When *Sennacherib*, king of Assyria, came to fight against Hezekiah, he sent Rabshakeh, his messenger, to slander Hezekiah and his God before all the people. Rabshakeh cried out with a loud voice to all in Judea, saying, ...

2 Kings 18:29-35

Thus says the king, "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you from my hand; nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, 'The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.' Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria, 'Make your peace with me and come out to me, and eat each of his vine and each of his fig tree and drink each of the waters of his own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey, that you may live and not die.' But do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you, saying, 'The LORD will deliver us.' Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

Such words were slandering Hezekiah as being foolish in leading the people of Judah. They were also blasphemous against the Lord. What took place? In one night, "The angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians" (2 Kings 19:35). With his army dead, Sennacherib returned to Assyria as a defeated king.

### **Abusive Speech**

David's son, *Absalom*, "used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate; and when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, ... "See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king" (2 Samuel 15:2, 3). Moreover, Absalom would say, "Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me and I would give him justice" (2 Sam. 15:4). This was a subtle form of slander against David the king. They are words meant to abuse. They are words meant to tear down:

"David's not running the kingdom very well. He is refusing to grant justice to everyone who comes! He is being incompetent in his reign."

These words led to a conspiracy against the king and a hostile takeover of the government (2 Sam. 15:7-18). What did it get Absalom? Initially, it brought him the kingdom. But, this was short-lived as those faithful to David were able to take back the kingdom, leaving Absalom hanging dead in a tree (2 Sam. 18:9-15).

### Lying

The account of *Ananias* and *Sapphira* comes to mind. They had a great opportunity of being involved in the early church with all of the wonderful things that the Lord was doing. The outflowing of love in this community was incredible. People were selling houses and land and giving the proceeds to the apostles to distribute among the poor in Jerusalem (Acts 4:33-34). Ananias and Sapphira were caught up in Spirit as well. They sold "a piece of property and kept back some of the price" for themselves (Acts 5:1-2). Then, they lied to the apostles about the price of the land that had sold for. What happened? Both Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead because of their lies.

Anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech, and lying are all sins that are expressly forbidden in Scripture. We also have seen the great warning of practicing these things. Before we head on to my next point, I would like to take some time to allow the Spirit of God to search our hearts and our minds.

I know the tendency we have as individuals is to think about how these things apply to others. Perhaps as I was preaching my message this morning, you were thinking of another person, in whom you can see these things clearly. Oh, how easy this is to do. If so, please beware. It may just be an instance where you can see the speck in your brother's eye, while you, yourself, are missing the log that is in your own (Matt. 7:3-5). In recent days, I have been doing some deep soul searching over these matters. I have been examining my heart and its motives. I have been examining the words that I speak. Such searching has been good for my soul.

It may just be that you have listened to these sins and have thought that you are totally free of them. After all, you aren't characterized by long and loud outbursts of anger. Neither are you making plans to harm anyone. You may think that your speech is above reproach. Oh, how easy is it to justify ourselves in these regards! It may just be that such things, though perhaps not large, may indeed be in your life. Perhaps the Lord right now might be convicting your heart of one of these areas. I would encourage you to think about these sins (anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech, and lying), and ask the Lord to show you areas in which even subtle forms of these things have begun to form in your heart. Please take a moment right now to reflect on our own sin in these areas. Plead with God for strength to put them off.

Should your own heart find that these things aren't present, hear the warning of Paul, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Be assured that "if you confess your sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Having discussed the six sins that we are to put off, let's turn now to my second point...

## 2. A Reason to Put Them Off (verses 9b-10)

Beginning in the last half of verse 9, we are told why we need to put off these sins, "[Put them all aside] ... since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him."

This statement here backs up the reasons why it is that we ought to put aside all of these sins. It's not to gain righteousness. It's not to gain merit before God. It's not a condition necessary for God to love us. The reason we put these sins off is because of who we are! Through faith in Christ, we have been given a righteousness. He have been given a hope. In Christ Jesus, Colossians 2:10 says that we are "complete in Christ." And it is precisely because we have been change that we ought to live differently. This is what the text says, ...

"[Put them all aside] ... **since** you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self." The ESV says the same thing, "[Put them all away] ... **Seeing that** you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self." The idea is that in Christ Jesus, you have put aside the your old stained garments and have put on the new clean garments. And thus, there is no reason to continue in your old behavior which stained your garments in the first place.

Perhaps another illustration will help. I have here a pair of my children's nice dress pants. When they wear these pants, there is a certain behavior that we expect of them. These are the sorts of pants they wear when they attend church. These are the sorts of pants they wear when they attend school or a concert of a holiday gathering with the family. When they wear these clothes, we expect for them to play nicely in them. We expect for them to stay off of the ground and stay off of the grass. We expect for them to stay off their knees. But, what can easily happen? They can forget how they are supposed to act. If they forget, then they end up with grass stains, dirt stains, and holes in the knee. And that is the picture here. When we, as believers in Christ, participate in the sort of sins Paul describes in verse 8, it is as if we are doing what we ought not to do with our nice garments on. We have put off our old garments and have put on our new, nice garments. As such, our behavior ought to reflect this, because of who we are.

Think about what Paul has already told us in Colossians of what Christ has done for us. It's through faith that God has "rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col. 1:13). It's no longer proper for us to participate in the deeds of darkness. In Christ we have been "reconciled ... in His fleshly body through [His] death" (Col. 1:22). In Christ, we were "raised up with Him through faith in the working of God" (Col. 2:12). In Christ, we were "made alive together with Him" (Col. 2:13). In Christ, "all our transgressions" have been forgiven (Col. 2:13). We have been "raised up with Christ" (Col. 3:1). In Him, we have been made complete (Col.

2:10). Our behavior ought to reflect these realities. We, who have died with Christ (Col. 2:20; 3:2) should make every effort to kill our sin (Col. 3:5). In chapter 1:10, Paul talked about "walking in a manner worthy of the Lord." That's what we want to do. In chapter 2:6, Paul talked about "walking in Him." That's what we want to do.

And so, why is it that we, as believers in Christ, find it so difficult to do? Why are there times when we still participate in these types of sins that Paul has listed: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed, anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech and lying? Let me ask you, "Why do children who are wearing nice dress clothes still get muddy?" It's because they are children. They like to slide in the grass and crawl around in the mud. So, why do we struggle to put off our sin? It's because we are still living in the flesh. We like to be doing these things. They are tempting to us. We can easily fall. We can easily stain our pants we are wearing.

What will help a child stay away from mud when he is wearing his nice pants? I think a constant reminder of what he is wearing will help. Perhaps his parent might say, "Jimmy, remember, you have your nice pants on! Don't go playing in the mud!" As Christians, we need that reminder ourselves. "You have been redeemed out of darkness! Don't walk in the darkness! You are being transformed!" That's the point of the last half of verse 10. "[We are] being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him." We are like a growing plant, that gets stronger and stronger as each day passes. But, we aren't yet a full grown plant. In the process of growing, there are obstacles and sins within our path that we will stumble upon. But, it's our desire to get there. And by God's help, we can because Christ is working in us (v.10).

Let's look at my last point this morning. I'm calling it ...

### 3. No Barriers to Putting Them Off (verse 11)

Oh, there's great hope in these words! There is much discussion today among psychologists about a person's background and upbringing. Psychologists are always interested in finding out about your past. They want to know about your relationship with your father. They ask you about whether or not your family moved around the country while you were still young. They want to know whether the kids at your school made fun of you when you were a child, and whether or not you were abused. They will ask whether you received good grades in school.

The idea behind all these questions is that your upbringing helps to explain the things that you struggle with as an adult. If your father was unloving, then you can't quite understand God correctly. If you moved around the country, then you will be insecure, as your life was unstable. If the kids at school made fun of you, then you will always think poorly of yourself. If you were abused, then you will have problems with forgiveness. If you received poor grades, then you will think that you will never be good enough. In so doing, the tendency is for us to seek excuses for our sin.

There are these barriers that our past has created that make it difficult for us to live a righteous life. But, Paul doesn't accept them as excuses. He said that this renewal that you experienced in Christ was (verse 11), "a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all."

Paul mentions these distinct groups in order to span the spectrum of human differences. He first notes the barrier between the Greek and Jew. This refers to the **racial barrier**. It doesn't matter whether you are black or white. It doesn't matter whether you are Arab or Asian. God's renewal knows no distinction. The power that you have to conquer your sin is irrespective of your origin.

Next, Paul mentions the barrier between the circumcised and uncircumcised. This refers to the **religious barrier**. The circumcised refer to the Jewish people, who did everything right in their religious upbringing. The uncircumcised refer to those who were outside the covenant and came from pagan backgrounds. So, it doesn't matter whether you grew up in a Christian Church or whether you grew up worshiping a cow. It doesn't matter whether you are from the Bible Belt or from the Sinful City. God's renewal knows no distinction. The power that you have to conquer your sin is irrespective of the religion in which you were raised.

Paul also identifies the **culture barrier**. He refers to the barbarian and Scythians. The barbarians were those who were uncultured. They didn't speak the Greek language, and thus were considered to be of a lower class of people. The Scythians were uncivilized, cruel people. They delighted in murder and torture of every kind. They used articles made of human bones for common household utensils. One commentator noted that these people "made napkins of the scalps [of their enemies]. [They made] drinking bowls of the skulls." [\[1\]](#) It doesn't matter whether you grew up as a Spanish speaking immigrant worker or an inner-city gang member. God's renewal knows no distinction. The power that you have to conquer your sin is irrespective of the culture in which you were raised.

Finally, we have the barrier between slave and freeman. This refers to the **social barrier**. Obviously, the slave was the one who was considered to be a piece of property, with no rights. The freeman was the upper class of society. So, it doesn't matter whether you grew up in the slums of Chicago and attended school only through the eighth grade, or whether your father was a multi-millionaire and you were sent to the prep school. God's renewal knows no distinction. The power that you have to conquer your sin is irrespective of the social class in which you were raised.

Look at the last phrase of verse 11. "Christ is all, and in all." Here's what Paul is getting at: Don't look to your background to make excuses for any lingering sin that remains in your members. Certainly, I'm sensitive to one's upbringing and the experiences that they have had. It may either speed up the process of sanctification or slow it down. But, Christ is all! He is all you need! He has all power! He is the one who will bring healing and help! So, when the temptation to sin comes upon you, don't look to your upbringing and excuse your sin. Look to Christ, who is in you and who is your all. Who has broken down every barrier that prevents you from being fully renewed in Him!

Paul's counsel to overcoming sin is much different than the counsel given by the false teachers in Colossae. They told the church to focus their attention upon the outward keeping of ceremonial rules and regulations (Col. 2:16-17). They pursued mystical visions and experiences (Col. 2:18-19). They focused their attention upon keeping away from the things of the world that might pollute them by merely touching or eating them (Col. 2:20-23). They claimed that these sorts of things were the way to achieve sanctification. But, Paul counsels us to look to

Christ, who is powerful enough to end all of our sin.

Do you want to know how to keep away from these sins? My counsel is simple. First, look to Christ, who made an end to your sin, believing that He will give you the power to overcome these things. And then, work really hard at putting off your sin (i.e. kill it and put it off).

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on October 1, 2006 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] Herodotus, book 4.