

The Freedom of Growth in Christ

Lesson Seven:

Walking With Jesus to Win Against Sin

Colossians 3:1-11

Only Christ can kill sin; only Jesus can defeat sin.

Greed = idolatry. Greed, like pride, is always behind our sinful behavior.



GREED

DOWNSIDE OF
THE ART

Colossians 3:1-11

Greed reveals the ungodly desires we allow to rule us in an unholy pursuit of what God forbids. It is an unsatisfiable desire for what God forbids.

The root of ungodly desire is what you are fighting against. We want to stop sinful behavior by cutting its root—the sinful desires which give energy to sinful deeds.

Colossians 3:1-11

Sinful desire is an expression of self-worship, which God says is idolatry. Your primary problem in sinning is your idolatrous heart.

Idolatry = your heart foolishly looking to a god-replacement—something or someone—to give you what only the true God can provide.

Idolatry is an expression of your greedy heart seeking its own way in place of God and His ways.

The world, the flesh, and the devil all make sure that we are in this struggle against sin as long as we are here on earth.

What can you do about these desires and their deeds?

If God's Word isn't worked into your heart, you can't expect His Word to be worked out in your life.

That truth operates within two parallel and related spiritual experiences in your daily life with the Lord.

The first experience recognizes God's of working His truth into your heart by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

This spiritual process is you living by the wisdom of the Lord.

The second experience expresses your activity of working God's Word into your heart as Jesus' follower/learner/disciple.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.”
(Prov. 3:5-8)

“He who separates himself seeks his own desire, he quarrels against all sound wisdom. A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind.” (Prov. 18:1-2)

Pursuing selfish pleasure in any form isolates you from truth.

Doing what is right in your own eyes = the pursuit of sinful desires.

Doing what is right in your own eyes ≠ fearing the Lord.

If you are going to grow in likeness to Jesus, you need to grow your heart's affection and high esteem for Jesus and His Word.

The fear of the Lord teaches you to hate your sin for what it is: death, decay, and defilement of what God says is precious and life-giving.

Deceitful desires are always self-centered and they always work against what God is working in. And so you must learn to join the Lord in putting off, laying aside, and killing the deceitful, selfish, prideful, greedy desires of your old life.

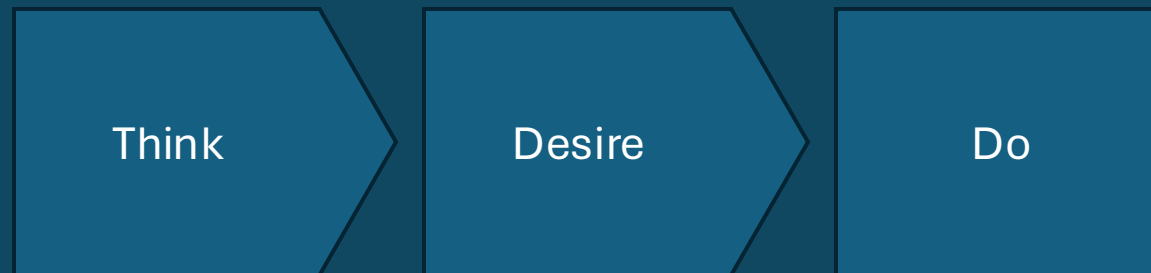
How do you do this?

You train yourself in working out what God is working in.

How do you do this?

It begins with what you think; the process of spiritual discipline for godly growth begins in your mind.

Your mind and desires work in concert. Your desires are at home in your mind so that what you think reflects what you believe and want.



The battle for spiritual growth (Christlikeness) is won or lost in your mind/heart. God's Word renews and trains your mind to think Christlike.

You are transformed by the renewing of your mind in what is true. This truth trains your heart in what to want so that you learn to want what God wants for you.

You need to learn to feed yourself the truth so that you practice taking God at His Word, then applying, obeying, trusting, and putting His Word to work in what you think, say, and do.

His Word will train, aim, and tame your desires in Christlikeness.

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Col. 3:16)

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according your word.... Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against you.” (Ps. 119:9, 11)

”I shall delight myself in Your statutes; I shall not forget your word. Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep Your word.” (Ps. 119:16-17)

“Establish Your word [promise] to Your servant, as that which produces reverence for You.” (Ps. 119:38)

Colossians 3:15-17

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...” (v. 15)

What is this peace which Jesus gives to govern our hearts? Colossians 1:13-14; 2:19-22

The peace of Jesus = the reconciling favor of God on your life. It is God’s grace of bringing you near to Himself.

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” (Jn 14:27)

God’s peace with us and in us is very precious. It steadies and readies our hearts among a people overcome by division, hatred, fear, worry, and anxiety.

“Rule” can also be translated as “act as arbiter” (NASB), as umpire, referee. Let the peace of Jesus toward you umpire your heart in all you think, say, and do.

Colossians 3:15-17

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you...” (v. 16)

What is this word of Christ? Colossians 1:5

The word of Christ = the teaching of Scripture, for the whole of Scripture is the word of Christ or the product of His wisdom. Jesus is the truth, and He taught the truth of God, so that the entire Bible is God’s truth.

Let Christ’s wise word “*richly dwell within you*”—let it be abundantly at home in your heart. God’s home for the Word of Christ is your spiritually renewed heart. So let the truth of Jesus have an abundant influence on the design and desires of your heart.

God’s Word should adorn the home of your heart with the beautiful riches of Christ’s character, wisdom, and ways.

Colossians 3:15-17

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...” (v. 17)

Make your life about Jesus.

In marriage, your primary role is to be God’s instrument in helping your spouse be conformed to the image of Jesus, to help them grow in Christlikeness.

When we learn to consistently think about all that we think, say, and do, as being a loving display of the character of Jesus toward others and as a way of investing in the spiritual growth of others in Christlikeness, we will go a long way in our own spiritual growth in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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