

# Put Off Sinful Speech as New People in Christ

Colossians 3:8-10

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## *AT END - ACTS 2 & BAPTISM – FHFM SIGNUPS AFTER*

This past Friday the school had a Veterans Day assembly honoring those who have served this country and fought for its freedoms. A few years ago we had a Pearl Harbor survivor attending GCBC, Debbie Nudo's dad, who was at Pearl Harbor in 1941. It always moves me to hear on the bagpipes 'Amazing Grace' and to see men and women who were in WWII or the Korean War or Vietnam. Our nation needs the grace of God, and God has shed His grace on America, but we need to be in prayer for His grace to keep going forth as religious freedoms are changing.

But as we look at Col 3 again, remember King Jesus is sitting on His throne. We can be thankful He's in charge. PTL for this nation, as imperfect as it is. One school parent I met was a veteran of special forces training in Iraq and Afghanistan and I spent a good deal of time talking with him. Reminded me of a story. A Gulf War 'army chaplain reported his amazement at the large number of Desert Storm soldiers who gave their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ, then asked if they could be baptized. To accommodate their requests, a wise pastor used the only "baptismal" available in the middle of the Saudi Arabian desert: a coffin—a ... perfect symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection of which baptism is a picture.'<sup>1</sup> Our baptistery is also like a large coffin. The cross on the front symbolizes death, and those who enter it to be baptized are making a public statement of death to the old sinful life, it's buried at the foot of the cross, covered by Christ, washed and cleansed.

They're declaring new life in Jesus. In the gospels a 12-year-old girl is resurrected as Jesus took her by the hand. Another time a funeral was underway for a young man, a crowd watched as Jesus '*came and touched the open coffin, and...He said, Young man, I say to you, arise. So he who was dead sat up...and they glorified God, saying, "...God has visited His people"*' (Lk 7:14-16 NKJV). The young man climbed out of his coffin, and today a young man and young woman who believe the Lord has touched and visited them will be lain in a coffin-like baptistery before this crowd. They'll sit up, rise, and climb out to walk a new life glorifying God. I pray today we'll all walk out of here changed in some way, by new life in Christ

Let's look at Col 3 and as we do let me read from Col 2 for a running start:

*'And you were...buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses...God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses...'* Now look at 3:1:

*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth... [pick up in v. 8, earthly sins]: But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

Main point & message title: Put Off Sinful Speech as New People in Christ.

Both I'm baptizing today can testify of changed lives in anger like v. 8 PTL.

Start with the context of v. 3, you have died (that's to your old sinful life).

We saw last week in v. 5 we need to put to death the deeds of our old life. As sins come back, beat them back. If they grab on, cast them off, v. 8 says.

If you've seen The Princess Bride, a giant rodent attacks Buttercup, Wesley puts it to death by putting it off in the fire, it rises up, and he stabs again 3x.

Anger -> danger

Sin doesn't die easily and it's dangerous. Paul says put it off, put it to death!

Last week I talked about the spider in Congo that came at me. It was evil! It jumped on my shirt and I stripped it off quickly and tried to put it to death but I couldn't find it to finish the job. That's the language here: put off and put to death the evil in you. It's the language of eliminating, exterminating. But sin is like weeds, kill them--they come back. So keep taking them out. This passage gets to the roots, key is to rip up and replace it with new life.

Speaking deceitfully or harshly -> truthfully and graciously

<p><b>Outline:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Put off sinful speech as you look to Christ</b></li> <li><b>2. Put on renewed thinking and living in Christ</b></li> </ol>
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Col 1-2 is all about who Christ is and who are in Him, our identity in Christ.

Col 3 starts telling us keep seeking Him, where He is, who we are in Him.

We sang of our identity earlier: we confess our worth and our unworthiness, unworthiness as sinners but our worth is in Jesus the worthy one slain for us

My worth is not in what I own, not in the strength of flesh and bone...

My worth is not in skill or name, in win or lose, in pride or shame...

I will not boast in wealth or might, or human wisdom's fleeting light

But I will boast in...my Redeemer, greatest treasure of my soul...satisfied in Him alone<sup>2</sup>

A Puritan William Marshall wrote *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*. It's about how life with Christ and union with Christ is key for true change: 'all spiritual life is inseparable from spiritual union with Jesus Christ... Paul tells us that union with Christ is a vast, all-embracing truth... *He* is our wisdom, *He* is our strength, *He* is our compassion, *He* is our sanctification'<sup>3</sup>

That's why Paul starts this chapter telling us to keep looking to Christ. **The key to putting off sinful speech** isn't just trying harder, it's **looking higher**.

'Look up to Jesus in everything you do, don't look to others to see what you should do, don't look left, don't look right, keep your eyes on Jesus Christ.'

**Look at others, there's sinful things to say, look to Jesus before you speak**

Many of us talk sinfully in our family in ways we don't with church family. I can think of times I was yelling at a sibling, but I'd look and see someone else and it would instantly change how I was speaking. So don't ever say 'I just can't control it, he makes me so mad!' You can and you do when you look and see someone or get a phone call and you change your tone of voice

Col 3 tells us to seek, to see Jesus. He's there and if you believe that, it will change how you speak with your family. How would a conversation change if Jesus walked into it? He's in it. If you seek Him you'll speak differently. We can all speak in ways that put off others, look to Jesus and put off sin.

**He's looking at you and listening and He's also there to help you**

The word in v. 8 for *put off* is the word in Heb 12 for an athlete: '**lay aside** every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> **looking to Jesus...**' I memorized it as: **throw off** everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles... Let us **fix our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross...and sat down at the right hand of the throne

That's how Col 3 starts, keep seeking Christ as He's sitting at the right hand – then v. 8 uses the same word for *put off* whatever weights us down to run, strip off whatever slows us down. I think of a guy named Bart in HS, he was a beast, a top wrestling champ. We'd play tackle football and he'd throw off guys trying to entangle him. He wouldn't let anyone cling closely to his legs

I was a very skinny kid back in HS, but one way I tried to build muscle and endurance for basketball or volleyball was training wearing ankle weights. I would jump and run with 5-15 lb. straps. It felt so good when I took off the weights and was able to run and jump farther and longer and faster with joy! That's the word for what we're to do with sin, put it off for the race of faith.

What sin weighs you down? Temptation can strengthen once you cast it off.

In Acts 19 when the Ephesians came to Christ they actually threw works of their old life into a massive bonfire in Acts 19 when they repented, and Paul is saying we must do that continually with words from our old life in v. 8-9. But it's like burning ash floats back, it lands on us, we have to put off again.

**Anger** in v. 8 leads to words that inflame. James 3 says the tongue is a fire.

**Proverbs 26** says ‘*As charcoal is to burning coals and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife... Where there is no wood, the fire goes out. And where there is no tale bearer, strife ceases*’ (v. 21, 20 NKJV). Another translation says ‘*without gossip, a quarrel dies down*’ (NIV). Sinful speech is like throwing a log on a fire, but you have a choice not to throw yours back.

v. 8 says throw off **anger, wrath, malice, slander**. Alexander MacLaren: “the heated metal of anger will be forged into poisoned arrows of the tongue.”<sup>4</sup>

I’ve seen more of those sins in the last few months than the last few years. Gossiping, grumbling, murmuring against church leaders or other believers.

The fiery darts of the evil one have poisoned people against each other, and behind the war on words there’s a spiritual warfare. I’ve felt attacks more than ever. As churches couldn’t meet or Christians chose not to when they could, the grace of gathering is missed and misunderstandings, misjudging, misspeaking, misrepresenting others spikes. As people stayed at home, I’ve seen resentment grow and bitterness shown. Good people divide and the evil one is at work in our assuming, accusing, or not choosing to believe the best

A Proverb says ‘*the churning of milk produces butter ... so the churning of anger produces strife*’ (30:33). There’s churning and a sense of burning in v. 8 in these words for what heats up and either clams up or blows up. Think a stove, anger left on simmering will burn what’s in it. Left on high, it boils.

Paul says in v. 8 we need to take off those sins in us and there’s an urgency in the grammar. Anger boils over and spills over onto others and hurts them

ILLUSTRATION: one of our kid’s had 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree burn by boiling water, my wife urgently rushed to strip off the clothing and get our child under cold water ASAP. It was an instant big blister, needing cleansing, and took time to heal, but the clothes where the burn was needed to be put off first or it would be worse. Boiling anger is that urgent: put it off, cool it off, heal if splashed on others. It took a lot of care and time to heal – do you need to heal from your words?

Put off **evil**. If an evil man grabs hold of you by the jacket, wouldn’t you try to put off your jacket in his hand to run? Put off evil, don’t let it hold you!

Angry sinful thoughts at others are like that, put off before words come out.

Pr 6 *These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue... [last two:] A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.*<sup>5</sup> That takes us from Col 3:8 to v.9

‘Words will never hurt me?’ – that’s a lie – and when you lie it deeply hurts.

Look at v. 9: *Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices.* Nothing is more natural to the old nature than lying.

Little kids can lie before they can talk. It's literally a sin from the beginning.

Serpent. Abraham lied. Isaac lied. Jacob lied. Laban lied to Jacob who ends up lying down with Leah on his wedding night thinking he married Rachel!

Ananias and Sapphira told a 'little' lie when they gave a lot of money to the church. It was a big deal to God who struck them dead for it. Our 'little' lies

- Excuses (to not look bad), embellishments (to make it sound better), exaggerations (make it seem bigger or broader [never, always, etc.]
- Telling half-truths, telling part of the story but leaving out key parts
- Someone calls, 'Did I wake you?' Or 'how you doing?' Great, super
- I caught myself this week retelling a conversation by what I thought, not actual words (made it sound more funny but made me convicted)

Heidelberg Catechism expounds '*thou shalt not bear false witness* in the 10 commandments: 'never give false testimony against anyone, twist no one's words, not gossip or slander, nor join in condemning anyone rashly or without a hearing. Rather, I should avoid, under penalty of God's wrath, every kind of lying and deceit as the very works of the devil...I should love the truth, speak it candidly, and openly acknowledge it. And I should do what I can to defend and advance my neighbor's honor and reputation.'

DeYoung comments on that: Sometimes you have to stop and say, 'Time out for a second. I'm not sure if we should be having this conversation right now. I don't mean to be critical but I'm just not sure.' Sometimes...we need to do the courageous thing and say, 'You know what? I don't think we know all the facts. We need to stop right here.'... ask yourself: Is it necessary to pass along this information?... ask yourself: Would the person I'm about to talk about be happy if I were to pass along this information?'<sup>6</sup>

1 Pet 2: '*laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy...all evil speaking... if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*' Don't lose sight of Jesus and His grace, the only man who ever lived who never lied, never bore false witness. He's called '*the faithful witness*' and '*the Faithful and True*' (Rev 19 & 1). He said of Himself '*I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life*' (Jn 14:6) and no one gets to the Father but through Him. His truth sets you free.

1. Put off sinful speech as you look to Christ

**2. Put on renewed thinking and living in Christ**

*...you have put off the old self with its practices* <sup>10</sup> *and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

One writer explains: ‘we have “laid aside” the old life of slavery... In view of that fact that we have, through repentance and faith, taken off and cast aside the old life and have “put on the new self” (v. 10), we ought no longer to live a double life, lying to our brothers and sisters in Christ... I have been made a new person in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Yet “...sin” continues to harass me, though its power has been broken. It continues to shout, to demand, and to woo me toward sin, but it can no longer *compel* me to sin.’<sup>7</sup>

Ever try to wear a shirt that didn’t fit? ADV CLUB ILLUSTRATION:)

Recently some HS friends got my cell number on a group chat about one of our old friends in the hospital. I got on a text string. ‘Is this Phil-Dog?’ (that was my old life). One said ‘I think I’ve got Phil’s old PE shirt around here somewhere?’ I said I’d have to see it to believe it. He sent me a screen shot.

I remember how I used to stink in that shirt! I needed to put it off then to be around others, now it’s old and doesn’t fit my new life and new physique.

v. 10: new self *is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

1:15 says Jesus is the image of the invisible God and He is Creator. Man is made in God’s image but the fall into sin damaged how we reflect the image.

Adam’s likeness now effaced [we pray to Jesus] stamp Thine image in its place  
Second Adam from above, reinstate us in Thy love,  
Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King

*Renewed* is present passive – ongoing making different, better, more and more like Christ – continuous action, repeated, progressive transformation.

Renewal is word for a new quality of life. How? 2 Cor 3:18, Rom 12:2.

Our outer man is wasting away but inner man is being renewed day by day

Eph 4:22: *lay aside the old self...be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created... laying aside falsehood [same as Col 3], speak truth each one of you with his neighbor ...only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear...do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity ...Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*<sup>8</sup>

- This is **gospel put off/put on**. Unbelievers can exchange 1 sin for another, but it’s like rearranging furniture on the Titanic before it crashes/sinks.
- This gospel is not about rearranging a few things in your life for self-improvement and smoother sailing. The gospel is about repenting of self, denying self, dying to self, and reversing course and reorienting your direction to Christ, while renewing, restructuring, and replacing everything.

- It's not about trying to get rid of bad habits for a better life before your boat crashes into an iceberg and goes down. It's about getting off that boat, putting on a lifejacket, getting in Christ the Life-boat with room for all.
- And if by faith you're onboard with Christ your Captain on a new course, there are new rules for us who are "in Christ" and new expectations for what we're to throw overboard. We're to cast off sins of v. 8-9 that can sink souls

When prisoners are released from custody and become free people again (putting off one role and assuming another), they change what they are wearing (putting off prison garb and putting on ordinary clothes). Similarly, when a soldier leaves the army and becomes a civilian ... we must also put away the old standards and adopt new ones.<sup>9</sup> New identity and new image.

This takes us to baptism. In old times they took off old clothes for baptism, a new person in Christ was 'told to think of that as a picture of renouncing the old way of living. The baptismal candidate took off his/her old clothes as a symbol of leaving the household of Adam. It is a figure of speech having to do with taking off a garment, which is no longer of any use...'<sup>10</sup>

In the early church converts laid aside their old garments, symbolizing their old life. They went into the water (symbolizing renewal) and then after the baptism they put on a new white robe, symbolizing their new life. As we see that in a few minutes, let it remind us of these truths and renew our thinking and speaking by who we are in Christ. Let's walk out different, live for Him

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<sup>1</sup> Jon Courson, *Application Commentary* (Nelson, 2003), p. 920.

<sup>2</sup> Fernando Ortega, "My Worth Is Not in What I Own."

<sup>3</sup> Walter Marshall, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* (Reformation Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1999, intro by Joel Beeke), p. xviii-xix.

<sup>4</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon: The Supremacy of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 98.

<sup>5</sup> v. 16-19 NKJV.

<sup>6</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments: What They Mean, Why They Matter, and Why We Should Obey Them* (Crossway, 2008), 148, 152.

<sup>7</sup> John Kitchen, *Colossians for Pastors*, 249-50.

<sup>8</sup> NASB.

<sup>9</sup> John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society : The Message of Ephesians* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 179-180, 183.

<sup>10</sup> Martha King, *Exegetical Summary of Colossians* (Dallas, SIL), 245.