

INTRODUCTION

The title of the sermon today is “How to Get Rid of Your Old Man.” This is not talking about a bad husband or a bad father. It’s talking about that old, sinful nature. If you misunderstand your instructions, you can get into a lot of trouble. I heard a funny story about the fellow who was in front of his house and a guy came along looking for work. The fellow had a large house and a big yard to take care of and said, “I have to work here in the front yard. I’ll hire you today and I want you to paint the shutters on the front of my house and then I want you to paint the porch in the back.” He gave the guy a gallon of white paint and the man started painting the shutters. Then, he went around to the back. A few minutes later the man came back and the paint can was totally empty. The fellow said, “Are you through already?”

“Yes, sir.”

“You mean you painted the shutters in the front?”

“Yes, I did.”

“And you painted the porch in the back?”

“I painted it, but I want you to know, mister, it’s not a Porsche, it’s an Electra.”

If you don’t know what you are supposed to be knowing, you can get into a lot of trouble and as Christians we need to remember what it is God has called us to do. It is to live righteous, holy, pure lives but if you try to do it in your own strength, you’ll fail miserably every time. We are going to be talking today about how to get rid of that old, sinful nature; that old man who is still lingering around even though you are a Christian.

Ephesians 4:17-24. “So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught about him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Please don’t raise your hand to answer this question. It’s a rhetorical question. “How many of you have gone from last Sunday to this Sunday without committing one single sin?” Raise your hand. Please don’t because I don’t want to make a liar out of you here in church. The truth is Christians struggle and deal with sin even though we have been born again. There are a couple of terrible misconceptions about the Christian life. One is that you really can come to a place in your life where you will never ever sin again. There are some Christians who believe that through some experience of instantaneous sanctification, you’ll get to the place where you never ever sin again: Sinless perfection.

Some years ago a lady said to me, “That’s right, pastor. I have not sinned in 14 years. I did not call her a liar, but that’s what I thought. I also thought the pride in that statement is sin in itself. There are some who believe you can come to the point where you are sinless. I don’t think the Bible teaches that. On the other extreme there are some Christians who say, “There is still sin in

my life so, big deal! I am going to heaven when I die. There is nothing I can do that will make me go to Hell, so I can just sin all I want to.” That’s dangerous also. The truth is, you will never come to a place this side of heaven where you are sinless, but every day you ought to be coming to a position where you sin less and less and less. Paul devotes one half of this passage to a non-Christian lifestyle, who you used to be. I’m not even going to talk about that today, because the vast majority of you listening to me today are Christians. The one major difference is this: A non-Christian sins, because it is their nature. They want to sin. They desire to sin. They are running towards sin. But a Christian who has truly been born again may stumble and fall into sin, but it is not their desire. You do not want to sin. You do not desire to sin. It grieves your heart when you do sin, and you are not running after sin. You are running from sin as fast as you can. That is a mark a sign that you are truly a Christian. The truth of the matter is the nature to sin is still with us as Christians. If you want to live a victorious Christian life, if you want to live in true righteousness and holiness, you need to learn to deal with that sinful nature to get rid of that old man that old, sinful nature that you were before you became a Christian. That’s what we want to talk about this morning.

I. RECOGNIZE YOUR SINFUL NATURE

There are three things about it. First, you must recognize your sinful nature, recognize that old man for who he is and what he wants to do in your life. Some people say, “I’m a Christian. There is no more sin in my life.” When you came to Christ and you were born again through the blood of Jesus in a heavenly transaction, Jesus Christ wrote “forgiven” over every sin you will ever commit or you have ever committed. That means is the punishment the penalty of that sin is no longer credited to your account it has been forgiven. That means when you die, you will not go to Hell. That is the ultimate penalty for sin. That doesn’t mean there won’t be sin in your life. It is still there and you must, today, in this life, suffer the consequences of sin in the life of a Christian. So, you have to learn to deal with it and that old sinful nature is still there.

1. Recognize the presence of sin in your life

First of all, recognize the presence of sin in your life, this old sinful nature this old self. If you are going to deal with this old man, you have to recognize he is there. There is quite a debate in the Christian community about whether a Christian has one nature or two. I’m not really going to get into to that. Suffice it to say, 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” And for sure as a Christian, you have a Jesus nature in you but there is still sinful nature. Whether it is in you or with you does not matter. It is still there. You say, “Pastor, I know that I am supposed to live holy, I’m supposed to live pure and righteous, but to be honest with you, I still struggle with sin and I still make a lot of mistakes. Am I okay?” I think everybody in this room would agree with me this morning the apostle, Paul, was what we would call a “super saint.” God used him. He was full of the spirit, but look in Romans 7:15 and read these interesting words: “What I want to do I do not do.” Can you relate to that? You want to read the Bible more, you want to pray more, you want to praise more, you want to control your temper more. Those things you want to do and that it’s right to do, you just don’t do it. Paul says, “That’s my problem.” Then Paul says also “those things I don’t want to do those wicked things those evil things that I don’t want to do I find myself doing those.” Can you relate to that? We’re talking about a super Christian by the name of Paul. But

you also understand what he says next. He says, “But, I understand that it is not me that sins it is not my Jesus nature it is sin that remains with me this old man.” Paul says, “I know that in my sinful flesh there is not one good thing.” Then, in Romans 7:24, he makes this cry of agony and frustration. “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” What in the world is he talking about? The picture he is employing as he talks about his old sinful nature will help you deal with yours too.

Heraclitus, who was a Greek philosopher, tells us Roman armies sometimes practiced an unusual way of preventing prisoners from escaping. When a Roman general went into battle, of course many of his Roman soldiers would fall to death on the battlefield. They also captured some prisoners of war of the newly-conquered army. They often took the corpses of the Roman soldiers fallen in battle and literally tied it on the back of a prisoner. This served two purposes: Number one, that prisoner would transport the body to a place where they could give it a proper burial of honor, but another reason they did that a prisoner who has a dead body on his back is not going to escape very easily is he? That is exactly the picture Paul employed when he is talking about his old sinful nature. He says, “Who shall deliver me from this corpse this body of death on my back?” That’s a pretty powerful picture. Paul is saying as Christians, although we have a new nature within us, we are still carrying around this old sinful nature just like a corpse on our backs. You have to learn to deal with it. Imagine right now an old dead body—your old lifestyle—hanging on your back. Before you can do anything with it, you have to recognize it.

2. Recognize the purpose of this old nature

Number two. Recognize the purpose of this old nature. What is that old sinful nature trying to do to you? In verse 22, Paul says it is trying to deceive you. “...which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.” It is this old nature that causes you to sin. “But I thought it was the devil that causes me to sin?” The devil never causes you to sin. The devil may tempt us, but he cannot cause you to sin. We are fighting a battle on three fronts. We are fighting the world, the flesh and the devil. The world is the external foe, the devil is the infernal foe and our flesh our old sinful nature, that is the internal foe. That’s the part of us that James 1:13 says you are not tempted by God. You are tempted when you are led away by your own flesh your own sinful nature. So, that nature is still there and it’s trying to drag you down, trying to hurt you and deceive you.

Christians still have to deal with sin. When I was just beginning my ministry, an old preacher came to me and said, “David, remember this: Sin will take you further than you ever wanted to go. Sin will keep you longer than you ever wanted to stay, and sin will cost you more than you ever wanted to pay!” It is so true. Deal with sin. Learn how to conquer sin. The first thing to do is recognize that old man, that old sinful nature, still with you.

II. LEARN TO REFUSE YOUR SINFUL NATURE

1. Refuse to follow those desires

Number two, you must learn to refuse your sinful nature, because your sinful nature is going to try to get you to do some things you should not do. First, refuse to follow those desires. Where is that sinful nature trying to lead you? It’s trying to lead you back into that old lifestyle, the old

habits, the old vocabulary, the old friends, the old places you used to go before you became a Christian. It’s trying to lead you back there. *Don’t follow it.* It is leading you to destruction. Can sin destroy a Christian? For a Christian, sin won’t send you to hell, but sin can make you so miserable in this life you will almost wish you were in hell. That’s what sin will do to a Christian. I have seen so many people who claimed to be Christians who were toying with sin, living in sin, refusing to repent of that sin, thinking everything was going to be okay, blinded to what that sin was going to do to them.

Max Lucado tells the story of an eagle flying over Niagara Falls. It was the coldest day of the winter and the river rushing to the falls was full of large blocks of ice. The eagle spotted a rodent trapped on one of these blocks of ice, unable to escape. The eagle circled around and swooped down on the rodent and killed it. Standing on that block of ice in the river, the eagle began to eat its prey. The people watching from the shore tried to distract the bird and get its attention to make it fly off, because they don’t want to see that beautiful, majestic eagle go over the falls and be killed. It’s was if the eagle was looking ahead to see how far away the falls were and he went back to his meal and looked up. It was almost as though you could see the self-confidence in the eyes of that bird saying, “I have plenty of time. I’m in control. I can take care of myself.” The spectators said just as the block of ice was beginning to go over the precipice, the eagle spread its wings to begin to fly, only to discover his claw had become encased in the ice and he was dragged to his death.

That’s a pretty powerful warning to each of us about what sin will do to us. I’m talking to Christians. You say, “I can quit anytime I want to.” Are you so sure? You say, “I have it under control.” Are you positively convinced you do? Sometimes a Christian talks to me and they have some habit in their life that is not pure and they will say something like, “I can take it or I can leave it.” That’s a brilliant statement! What other options are there? Taking it or leaving it. Sure I can take it or I can leave it. That’s like the guy who told me, “I can quit smoking anytime I want to. I’ve quit smoking 79 times.” Hmm...a lot of good it did. You can come to a place in your own life where sin controls you I’m talking about a Christian. If you don’t learn how to deal with refusing to follow that old man.

2. Refuse to feed those desires

Number two. Refuse to not only follow these evil desires, but refuse to feed those desires. These two natures are struggling and fighting within you. Turn to Galatians 5:17 and read exactly how Paul describes it. He is talking about the same thing. The Jesus nature and our sinful nature fighting against each other. Paul says, “For the sinful nature [that’s the old man, the old self, the flesh] desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.” Back in Ephesians 4, Paul says you have this sinful nature and you have this spiritual nature and they are in conflict, fighting against each other.

Most of you have heard the story that came out of the Wild West when a missionary went to a group of American Indians and led many of them to Christ. The missionary came back about a year later and he asked the chief of the tribe, who had become a Christian, “How goes it, my brother?” The Indian chief answered, “There seem to be two dogs in me fighting all the time.

There seems to be a black dog that is always trying to get me to do wrong and there seems to be a white dog that’s fighting the black dog and trying to get me to do right.” The missionary said to the Indian. “Which dog wins the fight?” The chief said, “The one I feed the most!” You can feed your good nature, your Jesus nature. So how do you feed it? It’s so obvious you are feeding it right now get into the Word, attend church Christian fellowship prayer. Do those things that feed that Jesus nature. It is possible for you to feed that sinful nature—and you need to refuse to feed it.

When I was growing up, my sister loved all kinds of animals. My dad really didn’t care for stray dogs, maybe one of the reasons was because for many years he bred, trained and sold short-haired pointers. We had a kennel behind our house and he was proud that these were purebred dogs and worth a lot of money. But not my sister. She loved any old mutt that came walking up to our house. It used to make my dad so angry when these mutts came up to our house. He would chase them off, but they kept coming back. Why? Because right after he chased them off, my sister went out with some dog food and brought them back. She fed them, and because she fed these stray dogs hung around. If we had not fed them, they would not have come back. If you feed the old sinful nature we all have, it is going to get stronger, but if you refuse to feed it, then it will become weaker.

III. REPLACE THAT SINFUL NATURE

Exactly what am I talking about? Some of you struggle with pornography, with lust and impure sexual thoughts. If that is the problem, don’t feed it—starve it. Avoid those television shows or movies or videos highlighting gratuitous sex. Avoid it like the plague, go away from it. Some of you have a weakness for alcohol, which is the greatest drug problem in America, or illegal or prescription drugs. If that it is your weakness, don’t feed it. Stay away from it, avoid it at all costs. The Bible says, “Leave those desires those lusts. Turn and walk away from it.” If you feed them, they will get stronger, but if you starve them and feed your Jesus nature, it gets stronger. Refuse to follow it. Refuse to feed it. You need to recognize that old man. He is there. Refusing him is enough. Number three. You must be willing to replace that sinful nature. It’s not enough just to stop doing bad—you have to replace it with something else.

That’s kind of like the guy who wrote a letter to the Internal Revenue Service. He said:

Gentlemen: Enclosed you will find a check for \$150.00. I cheated on my income tax return last year and have not been able to sleep ever since. If I still have trouble sleeping, I will send you the rest.

Sincerely...

That’s what you call “halfway repentance.” He stopped doing what was wrong, but he didn’t start doing exactly what was right. You need to not only recognize that old man, refuse that old sinful nature, but replace it. Start doing something else.

Look at verses 23-24. The Bible says, “Put off your old self...be made new in the attitude of your minds...put on the new self.” That is actually a picture of putting on a garment. “Put off the

old man." Take him off; get him off your back. "Put on" like a garment "the righteousness of Jesus Christ." That's an act of your will. You do that by choice, a decision. I think everybody listening to me woke up this morning. Hopefully, you are still awake. But I doubt anybody in this room today has on the same thing you slept in last night. I hope you don't. Every one of you said, "I am going to church today." That's an act of your will. You looked in your mirror and said, "I don't believe what I have on right now is appropriate for church." So you took it off and put something else on. Notice it wasn't how you felt. You say, "I don't feel like putting on some new clothes." It was the thing to do by an act of your will, you just put them on. That's what you can do in your walk with Jesus. You can put off the old nature and put on the Jesus nature. It is something you choose to do. Isaiah 61:3 talks about that. "Put on the garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair." It doesn't matter whether you feel like praising the Lord; just put on that garment of praise and watch how the spirit of despair leaves. Put on the garment of the righteousness of Jesus and see how that old man leaves. Put off the old man and put on Jesus. You do that by an act of your will.

1. A new attitude in your mind

First of all it takes a new attitude in your mind. That's what it says in verse 23. "Be made new in the attitude of your minds." Proverbs 23:7 says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." In other words what you think about is generally what you do.

I heard about a Sunday School teacher who was talking along these lines to his 17-year-old boys and said, "Guys, I just want you to know that whatever you think about the most you'll become." One boy said, "Uh oh! I'm going to become a 17-year-old girl!" But whatever you think about the most is generally what you do. A thought becomes a deed; a deed becomes a habit; a habit becomes a lifestyle and a lifestyle becomes a destiny. It all starts with a thought. If your thinking is wrong, your destiny will be wrong, but if you can address it right here in your thinking mind, if you start thinking right in your walk with Jesus and your attitude about sin and righteousness and purity, that's when your actions and your lifestyle and your destiny can be altered. The brain is an amazing organ. It starts working the moment you are born and doesn't stop until you stand up in front of a crowd to speak. But your brain can only think of one thing at a time. You say, "Mine can't even think of one thing at a time sometimes."

2. A new attitude in your actions

Let's conduct a little experiment. I want you to think of an apple, an apple in your mind's eye. Now change that picture into a snarling Doberman pinscher. I know which picture you like better. But did you cannot think of both of those simultaneously. You might try to picture a Doberman pinscher with an apple in his mouth, but you either have to do that or go back and forth. You cannot picture both at the same time. Your mind can only grab one image at a time. You say, "Why are you telling me that?" Well that is one of the ways you overcome this old man. You refuse to feed him. Maybe some thought comes into your mind and it's a temptation just change thoughts just like you put on some new clothes. Instead of thinking of that lustful, sinful thought picture in your mind Jesus on the cross. Control your thoughts. Let them be renewed; let this mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus. It starts in your mind, but it also requires a new attitude in your actions, the way you think and then the way you act, because if

you think wrong you will act wrong.

This week in the newspaper and on the news, many of you heard about a tragic young man in San Diego, California. His name is Timothy Nelson, a 35-year-old whose life seemed to be falling apart. In fact, his neighbors said, "His life is crumbling. His house is being foreclosed. His utilities have been shut off, his girlfriend just broke up with him, and he just lost his job." He was really hurting. But instead of seeking help, what did he do? He broke into the National Guard Armory and stole a 60-ton tank! He drove it around a neighborhood and flattened 15 cars, ran over telephone poles and uprooted fire hydrants. He was trying to get on the expressway where he could have caused a lot of damage not only to property, but to lives. The sad conclusion of that story is they shot him there in that tank and he is dead.

As I read the article about it, I wasn't so much interested in the damage the tank caused as I was to read between the lines in the damage in his mind, because he was a hurting, struggling, young man who was really emotionally wounded. I thought to myself wouldn't it have been wonderful if he had had a church he could have gone to someone in that church and said, "I am hurting. Can you help me?" Wouldn't it have been great if he had had a Sunday School class he could have called the care group leader and said, "Would you pray with me right now? I'm hurting." If he had had a discipleship group, he could call a prayer partner and say, "Listen man, I need some help right now." Just think of how his life would have been changed and he could have still been alive today. Then, the thought hit me. I believe in Green Acres Baptist Church. I think there may be dozens maybe even hundreds of people who are close to the edge emotionally. They are thinking the wrong thing. There is no help, there is no hope—this is the end! And they are really close to going over the edge like that young man. I'm here to tell you: There IS help and there IS hope! There are people who love you and care for you and when you are struggling, don't you dare fall into the trap of thinking in your mind, "Nobody loves me! Nobody cares!" If nothing else, the people in this church love you and care for you and we want to help you. Just let us know where we can help you. Change your mind and it changes your actions.

Here's the key: Romans, 6:6. "For we know that our old self [that old man] was crucified with him so that the body of sin [that old dead body] might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." Draw a couple of hearts big enough to draw something on the inside. Inside the center of each heart, draw a cross. Inside each of those hearts, draw like a throne (a seat) maybe just the little letter "H" or something will be enough. In the heart on the left, put the letter "S" on the throne and put the letter "C" on the cross, because that's what verse 6 of Romans 6 is talking about. If your self, your old sinful nature, is on the throne of your life, Jesus, is still on the cross. The Bible says it's like you crucifying him again in the flesh. In the heart on the right put "C" on the throne and put "S" on the cross. That's the key, because if you will reckon that your self, your sinful nature, is on the cross being crucified, then Christ is on the throne.

Which one of those hearts represents your life right now? Not what it ought to be, but which one represents your life. The true righteousness and true holiness Paul writes about in verse 24. It's not something you do; it's something Jesus does in and through you. It says, "He creates in us." There is only one Creator. I am not a creator. You are not a creator. No human being has ever been a creator. Only God is the Creator. (Capital "C") You cannot create righteousness. You

cannot create holiness. It’s something God does in you and it is a miracle. Miracles still happen. God is real!

CONCLUSION

Someone gave me a book the other day called, *Where Miracles Happen*. I read it and I was amazed. One night a pastor sent his two teenage daughters to the mall, warning them to be home before it closed, but they let the time get away and before they knew it, the stores were closing. They rushed outside only to find their car was parked at the other end of the deserted parking lot. There had been an increase in crime and muggings and rapes in that area. They started walking as fast as they could across the parking lot. A few feet from their car, every woman’s nightmare came true for them, they heard running footsteps behind them. They turned and saw two evil-looking men running at them as fast as they could saying, “You’re not going anywhere!” Frantically, one girl put the key in the door and opened it. They jumped in and jammed the door locks down just as those men got to their car. They were pulling on the doors, rocking the car, and pounding on the windows, looking for something to break the window to get in. The girls were weeping hysterically. She put the key in the ignition and turned it. Nothing happened. She tried again and nothing. She blew the horn to scare them off or to get attention, but the horn didn’t work. This pastor said his two teenage daughters joined hands in the front seat of the car crying and prayed a frantic prayer, but a prayer full of faith. They said, “Dear God we need a miracle please help us!” That was all they prayed. The daughter driving tried the key one more time and the car roared to life. She jammed it into gear and raced out of the parking lot and, of course, they cried all the way home. When they got home, they stumbled into their father’s arms and told him and their mother what had happened. Of course, they thanked God for delivering their daughters, but the pastor said, “I can’t understand it. The car should be working there is nothing wrong with it.” He said, “I’ll check it out the next morning.” This pastor said the next morning he went down to the car which had been in the garage ever since the girls arrived the previous night. He opened the hood and fell to his knees, because he realized Who it was who had gotten his daughters back home, because he says there was no battery in the car!

God is a God of miracles. God is a God of might. He is the one who can create a new personality in you—so let’s get rid of that old man!

OUTLINE

I. RECOGNIZE YOUR SINFUL NATURE

Recognize

1. The presence of sin in your life
2. The purpose of this old nature

II. REFUSE YOUR SINFUL NATURE

Refuse to

1. Follow those desires
2. Feed those desires

III. REPLACE THAT SINFUL NATURE

With a new attitude in your

1. Mind
2. Actions



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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes