

Love the Lord (Not Things Devoted to Destruction)

by Tricia Berg

I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed! Come, Lord! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen. 1 Corinthians 16:21-24

We usually think of Paul blessing instead of cursing, don't we? We know from his writings that he MUCH preferred blessing, but when necessary, he didn't shy away from saying the hard things that needed to be said.

*And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. Therefore **I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. **I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.** And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. **I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.** You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:25-35*

*I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to **admonish you as my beloved children.** For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, **be imitators of me.** That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to **remind you of my ways in Christ,** as I teach them everywhere in every church. **Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.** But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. **What do you wish?***

Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness? 1
Corinthians 4:14-21

Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and **all for your upbuilding, beloved**. For **I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.** 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them**—since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God. 2 Corinthians 12:19-13:4

For even if I boast a little too much of our **authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you**, I will not be ashamed. **I do not want to appear to be frightening you with my letters**. For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account." Let such a person understand that **what we say by letter when absent, we do when present**. 2 Corinthians 10:8-11

The Greek word in the verse at the top translated "let that person be cursed" is anathema, which actually carries a very severe meaning: "let [him] be given up for destruction." In the Old Testament, there were things "devoted to destruction." They were not redeemable. Among them were people who worshiped false gods—idolaters.

"Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than the LORD alone, shall be devoted to destruction." Exodus 22:20

"But no devoted thing that a man devotes to the LORD, of anything that he has, whether man or beast, or of his inherited field, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to the LORD. **No one devoted, who is to be devoted for destruction from mankind, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death."** Leviticus 27:28-29

The same is true today about idolaters being devoted to destruction. Remember, we are REDEEMED by the precious blood of Jesus. (1Pet. 1:17-19, Rom. 3:21-26, Rev. 5:9, Acts 20:28) Whoever persists in refusing to believe in Jesus, the ONLY way to be saved, is condemned to eternal destruction by fire, like the detestable things devoted to destruction (if they continue in their unbelief until they die or until Jesus returns, whichever comes first). No one can save anyone except Jesus, but we can share the Good News, provide a loving example of what it is to be a beloved child of God, and pray without ceasing. Each of us makes his or her own choice what to do with the offer of the gift of salvation. No one who humbles themselves and puts their faith in Jesus will be put to shame. (Rom. 10:8-15)

*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; **whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.** John 3:36*

*And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone **worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand**, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be **tormented with fire and sulfur** in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And **the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.**" Revelation 14:9-11*

*Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the **book of life**. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. **This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.** Revelation 20:11-15*

*The one who overcomes will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, **their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.**" Revelation 21:7-8*

*Blessed are those who wash their robes [in the blood of the Lamb, the Son of God - John 1:29, 1John 1:7, Rev. 1:5], so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. **Outside** are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. Revelation 22:14-15*

The instructions regarding things devoted to destruction were clear, as were the reasons for those instructions. The spoils of war (in battles which were won by the favor and power of God - Josh. 1:1-9) belonged to and were devoted to God. The things belonging to the people being driven out of the land ahead of the Israelites' taking possession were not to become temptations to lead Israel astray. (The promised land is a "type" of the Kingdom of God. Matt. 13:41-43, Isa. 4:2-6, Isa. 2:1-22, Zeph. 3:11-13)

The people to whom the spoils had belonged did not worship God, but rather worshiped false gods and in ways that were detestable (child sacrifice, sexual immorality, worshiping the heavenly bodies, and things like that - Exo. 34:11-14, Judges 2:3, Deut. 4:15-20, Jer. 7:30-31, Jer. 19:3-5, Ezek. 8:1-18). Things of gold, silver, bronze and iron (that had not been made into idols) were to be put into the Lord's treasury—not coveted or kept by anyone. **No one and nothing is to be placed above God in the heart of a believer.**

*The carved images of their gods you shall **burn with fire**. You shall **not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it**, for it is an **abomination** to the LORD your God. And you shall **not bring an abominable thing into your house and become devoted to destruction like it**. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is **devoted to destruction**. Deuteronomy 7:25-26*

None of the devoted things shall stick to your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger and show you mercy and have compassion on you and multiply you, as he swore to your fathers, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, keeping all his commandments that I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the LORD your God. Deuteronomy 13:17-18

But you, **keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction**, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD." Joshua 6:18-19

Unfortunately, we know that Achan kept some of the things that were warned about. He apparently forgot that God sees all, and he thought it was worth it to give in to that temptation despite knowing better. The man loved THINGS more than he respected God.

*But the people of Israel **broke faith in regard to the devoted things**, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, **took some of the devoted things**. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel. Joshua 7:1*

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. **If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but **whoever does the will of God abides forever.** 1 John 2:15-17*

*You **adulterous** people! Do you not know that **friendship with the world is enmity with God**? Therefore **whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "**He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us**"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives **grace to the humble.**" **Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.** James 4:4-10*

God was SERIOUS about this. He doesn't say things He doesn't mean. All Israel suffered for what Achan did, until they purged the evil from among them. These instructions applied to anyone who might try to lead Israel away from the ONE, TRUE, LIVING GOD. (Deut. 13:1-18) The reason for the severity of the remedy was that sin spreads like cancer does throughout the whole body unless stopped—a little leaven leavens the whole lump. (1Cor. 5:6-7)

***Your boasting is not good.** Do you not know that **a little leaven leavens the whole lump**? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the **old leaven**, the leaven of **malice and evil**, but with the **unleavened** bread of **sincerity and truth.** 1 Corinthians 5:6-8*

Joshua learned that something was amiss when their army was badly defeated, so he humbled himself and cried out to God (who had promised to be with them and give them the victory). God then revealed to Joshua what the problem was and what to do about it.

*The LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; **they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies.** They turn their backs before their enemies, because **they have become devoted for destruction.** I will be with you no more, unless you **destroy the devoted things from among you.** Get up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, God of Israel, "**There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you.**" Joshua 7:10-15*

*Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me." And Achan answered Joshua, "Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I **coveted them and took them.** And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath." So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the people of Israel. And they laid them down before the LORD. And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters and his oxen and donkeys and sheep and his tent and all that he had. And they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, "Why did you bring trouble on us? The LORD brings trouble on you today." And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. **Then the LORD turned from his burning anger.** Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor. Joshua 7:19-26*

That was the Old Testament. Thankfully, we are not called to kill ANYONE in this age. However, we are still to break fellowship with people who deliberately sin against God, until they repent. God wants ALL to repent and be saved. It's better for someone to learn that He is serious now than to find out after it's too late. Paul illustrated this for us in 1Cor. 5:1-13. A man who was committing sexual sin had not been removed from fellowship with the congregation.

*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. **And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?** Let him who has done this be **removed from among you**. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to **deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord**. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5*

Paul told them how to handle this situation for the health of the Body of Christ. The point was not to destroy the man, but to show him what he must do to save his spirit—repent!

*I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you **not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one**. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Purge the evil from among you." 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (Also see Deut. 13:1-18, Deut. 17:2-7)*

The Corinthians did as they were told, and we can gather from the next letter Paul wrote that the result was that the man repented and was welcomed back into the congregation with love. God never calls us to choose between truth and love, but requires BOTH.

*And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For **I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you**. Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to **reaffirm your love for him**. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, **so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs**. 2 Corinthians 2:3-11*

For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, **I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting.** For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For **godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret**, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. 2 Corinthians 7:8-11

Your restoration is what we pray for. For this reason **I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.** Finally, brothers, rejoice. **Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.** 2 Corinthians 13:9-13:11

The **aim** of our charge is **love** that issues from a **pure heart** and a good conscience and a **sincere faith.** 1 Timothy 1:5

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a **pure heart.** 2 Timothy 2:22

Imagine if Joshua had not obeyed God when He told him how to handle the problem with Achan. Anyone who learned of what Achan did would see that he got away with it and may have been emboldened to defy God as well. Not only that, but Israel would have been destroyed by their enemies, because God was not on their side. Our enemies in this age are unseen, but God gives us His armor to wear. Notice in BOTH the passage above (2Cor. 2:11) and the one below that Paul refers to how we are fighting against Satan.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. **Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.** Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can **extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;**

and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:10-20

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you **once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—** among whom we all **once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.** Ephesians 2:1-3*

NO ONE earns salvation, but EVERYONE who IS saved obeys God. Again, thankfully, Jesus intercedes for us. His blood will wash us clean of ANY sin, no matter how many times we SLIP, if we confess it to Him and repent. (1Cor. 6:18-20. Rom. 12:1)

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. **My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. **Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,** but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. **By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.** 1 John 1:5-2:6*

Jesus said that the one who loves Him will obey His commands, and is expected to do so since He is Lord. (Matt 7:21-29, Acts 2:36) He was not talking about the letter of the law, which hypocrites at that time were keeping while ignoring the spirit of it. God made it clear throughout the Bible that He detests sacrifices from a person whose heart is filthy inside. (Matt. 15:18-19, Isa. 1:11-23, John

4:23) He wants a pure, clean heart of devotion to Him—doing His will out of love and gratitude, as an act of worship of Him, the ONLY God, the ONLY Savior, the ONLY Creator—THE GREAT I AM, our ALL in ALL.

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus answered him, “**If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.** John 14:21-24

“By this my Father is glorified, that you **bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.** As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. **Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. **This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **You are my friends if you do what I command you.**” John 15:8-14

“Blessed are the **pure in heart,** for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, **love one another earnestly from a pure heart,** since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. 1 Peter 1:22-23

For **the love of Christ controls us,** because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might **no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.** 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For **this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.** And his commandments are not burdensome. 1 John 5:2-3

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am **gentle and lowly in heart,** and you will find rest for your souls. For **my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**” Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus, Paul and James very concisely summarized what those commandments were:

*But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.**" Matthew 22:34-40*

*"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for **this is the Law and the Prophets.**" Matthew 7:12*

*Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for **the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.** For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are **summed up** in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.** Romans 13:8-10*

*If you really **fulfill the royal law** according to the Scripture, "You shall **love your neighbor as yourself,**" you are doing well. James 2:8*

*You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall **love your neighbor as yourself:** I am the LORD. Leviticus 19:18*

*But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the **new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.** Romans 7:6*

I don't really know how anyone can interpret the Golden Rule (aka the Royal Law) as being free TO sin and/or approve of sin. The Bible is not a la carte. Read what James and Paul said about it:

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, **deceiving yourselves.** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But **the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.** James 1:22-25*

So speak and so act as those who are to be **judged under the law of liberty**. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? **So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.** James 2:12-17

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what **instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus**. For this is the **will of God**, your sanctification: that you **abstain** from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to **control his own body in holiness and honor**, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that **no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have **put off the old self with its practices** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, **compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other**; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And **above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, **teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:5-17

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God **gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done**. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, **they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them**. Romans 1:28-32

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might **walk in newness of life**. Romans 6:1-4

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? **Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?** But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become **slaves of righteousness**. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now **present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification**. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:12-23

Peter warned that people twist some of the things that Paul said, along with other Scriptures, to their detriment. Remember, the grace God gives us includes His power within us through the Holy Spirit to overcome the temptations and

deceit of this world. (Eph. 5:1-21, Eph. 3:7, 16, 20, Eph. 6:10, Col. 1:11, 2Thess. 1:11) Let's speak the truth in LOVE, caring more about souls than whether people think we're "nice" for not going along with the world or not. (Eph. 4:11-32, 2Tim. 3:12-13) The whole world is going to find out one day that God is serious about holiness and His good name, and He is not to be ignored and disrespected. (Isa 34:1-4, Psa. 2:1-12, 2Tim. 2:19-22)

*Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to **live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does. The end of all things is at hand; therefore be **self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.** Above all, keep **loving one another earnestly**, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to **serve one another**, as good **stewards of God's varied grace**: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. **Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet **if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?** And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore **let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.** 1 Peter 4:1-19*****

*Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, **be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.** And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as **our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you***

according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:14-18

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, **having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire**. For this very reason, make every effort to **supplement your faith with virtue**, and virtue with **knowledge**, and knowledge with **self-control**, and self-control with **steadfastness**, and steadfastness with **godliness**, and godliness with **brotherly affection**, and brotherly affection with **love**. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they **keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**. For **whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins**. Therefore, brothers, be all the more **diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall**. For in this way there will be **richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to **recall these things**. 2 Peter 1:3-15

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