

The War Within

Fighting Sin with a Passion for Christ and the Grace of God

Men's Retreat, Pastor Brad Bigney, Oct. 2-3, 2015

Titus 2:11-14

I. It's God's Grace that Teaches You to Say 'No' to Sin in Your Life

Titus 2:12 "... teaches us to say 'no' to sin..."

Ephesians 6:4 "Fathers...bring up your children in the **training** and admonition of the Lord."

The grace that first saves us is the same grace that now trains us to live lives that are pleasing to God.

You can talk about putting off & putting on... but without God's grace exploding in the chambers of your heart it's all busy work.

I Corinthians 15:10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

Just say "No" will never get it done. Just gritting your teeth and trying harder won't last. That's why Paul begins all his letters with "grace to you" and ends them with "grace be with you." And in between are plenty of exhortations about what to do and not do—but it's all sandwiched between grace.

You can talk about radical amputation.

You can talk about accountability partners.

You can talk about genuine repentance.

You can talk about putting off & putting on... but without God's grace exploding in the chambers of your heart it's all busy work.

II. God's Grace Gives You a Greater Burning 'Yes!' as you focus on the King of Grace-Jesus Christ

"When principles or steps wander from Christ himself, they become self-serving guidelines. They make our marriages, families, friendships, and work go better, but the goal is our own betterment more than the glory of God... 'Be good' and 'Do right' are fine messages, but when they stand alone they have more in common with the Boy Scouts' Handbook than Scripture. Remember that in the Bible, 'This is who God is and what He has done' always precedes 'This is what you must do.' Action follows our knowledge of God and trust in Him. It is as if God has said to us, 'Now that you have seen who I am, you will want to love Me in return...'" **Addictions: a Banquet in the Grave**, Edward T. Welch, P. 155

Ephesians 2:2-7 "... once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom we also once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. **But God**, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

“It is a dreary holiness indeed that is merely resisting sin. The joy of holiness is found in having heard a sweeter song... This is the true meaning of grace. Grace does not demonize our desires nor destroy them nor lead us to deny them. Grace is the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming our desires so that knowing Jesus becomes sweeter than illicit sex, sweeter than money and what it can buy, sweeter than every fruitless joy. Grace is God satisfying our souls with his Son so that we're ruined for anything else!” **One Thing** (*Developing a Passion for the Beauty of God*), Sam Storms, pg. 123 & 140

- Are you so satisfied in God's Son, Jesus Christ that you're ruined for anything else?

“Sin is what we do when we're not satisfied in God.” – John Piper

If you want to be fighting sin effectively then you need to be tasting the sweetness of Jesus Christ and the things of God so that you're ruined for anything else! You need to be ruined for anything else!

You start to break the power of sin in your life when you've tasted first-hand... up-close... for yourself... the pleasures of God in His Son Jesus Christ... and then and only then can you see how the pleasures of sin are temporary and toxic.

Psalms 16:11 that says, “... in Your presence is fullness of joy, in Your right hand are pleasures evermore.”

Hebrews 11:25 “... the passing pleasures of sin”

There's not much use in depriving your soul of sinful pleasures if you're not taking specific steps to feast on all that God is for us in Jesus, Christ-the King of Grace. So don't just say 'No!' You better be saying 'Yes' to all that God is for us in Christ Jesus!

- Are you ready to be ruined?

“Holiness does not come merely by creating a list of moral taboos and then exerting our willpower to resist them. ‘Just Say No’ alone doesn't work. Of course, we must say ‘No.’ Please don't misunderstand me. But lasting, meaningful victory will come only if there is something more enticing to which we can say ‘Yes!’ ... We must fight sin with a massive promise of superior happiness. We must swallow up the flicker of sin's pleasure in the forest fire of holy satisfaction. The only thing that will ultimately break the power of sin is passion for Jesus. The only thing that will guard me from being entrapped by sin is being entranced by Jesus. In other words, the key to holiness is falling love!” **Pleasures Evermore**, Sam Storms, p. 31-32

“Though we can often point to a lack of amputation or a failure to remain accountable to someone locally or lack of time in the Word as the problem the truth is... Radical Accountability, Amputation and Appropriation are in and of themselves of little lasting value without... ‘Radical Adoration’.

People can read the Bible, repent and be sorrowful for their sins and sever the areas of access to that which trips them up. We could find a local accountability partner but we cannot rely on our accountability partners because sooner or later those relationships drift away or we will be unable to get a hold of them in a moment of need. We cannot always rely on our filter because we will inevitably get a new computer that will not come with a filter preinstalled or be somewhere that porn is available for viewing or purchase. We cannot only shop in stores where unattractive people dressed in burlap bags shop, and to my knowledge there are no college campuses, beaches or streets in cities that require full length summer apparel that show no skin. Without falling in love with Jesus Christ and seeking to serve Him daily with all

their heart, mind, soul and strength it is only a matter of time before our resolve to stay away from the old idols begins to weaken and down we will go.” **Shon Bruellman**, The Executive Director of Setting Captives Free, quoted in *Your God Is Too Safe*, Mark Buchanan, p. 172

Three Attitudes to Cultivate:

A. You have to be Looking Forward to His Return! *Living with a sense of anticipation – Hope*

Titus 2:13 “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

"A startling thing has happened among Western Christians. Many of us habitually think and act as if there is no eternity - or as if what we do in this present life has no bearing on eternity... Being oblivious to eternity leaves us experts in the trivial, and novices in the significant... most Christians, let alone the general public, do not even have an accurate picture of what the Bible says will happen to us after we die. We major in the momentary and minor in the momentous." Randy Alcorn, *Money, Possessions and Eternity* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1989), pp. 138-139

Most men who are caught in sin landed there by **majoring** on the momentary and **ignoring** the momentous... and that must be turned around.

"Not everyone thinks it helpful to focus on the future. They've bought into the old adage that people who do are 'so heavenly minded they're of no earthly good.' On the contrary, I'm persuaded that we will never be of much use in this life until we've developed a healthy obsession with the next... evidently there is something about heaven that makes our anticipation of its experience profoundly life-changing." *One Thing* ~ *Developing a Passion for the Beauty of God*, Sam Storms, p. 163-164

2 Peter 3:10-12, 14 “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of person ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God... Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.”

B. You’ve Got to Keep Looking Back at the Sacrifice of your Lover on the Cross to Keep - *Living with a sense of liberation - Freedom*

Titus 2:14 “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed...”

This fight against sin is rooted in an understanding of what Christ did for us on the cross... so don’t just keep looking at your sin... you have to be looking forward to His return... filled with hope... and you have to be looking back at the cross – recognizing the freedom that Christ purchased for you there.

“Why spend time and energy on the character and beauty of God and Jesus? The answer is easy. It is so that you will walk around spiritually dazed, with your mouth wide open and your eyes bulging from your head. Why? Because spiritually stunned people are not easily seduced by sin. People in awe of God find sin less appealing. When you are dazzled by God it is hard to be duped by sin. When you are enthralled by His beauty it is hard to become enslaved by unrighteousness. People whose attention has been captured by the beauty of Christ find little appeal in the glamour of this world. People whose hearts are enthralled with the revelation of God's greatness turn a deaf ear to the sounds of Sirens. They've heard a sweeter

C. You’ve Got to Stay Focused on the Calling of your Lover! *Living with a sense of determination - Purpose*

Titus 2:14 “... and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

Fighting sin is not just a fight to say ‘no’ to sin... it’s a fight to stay consumed with the things of God... remembering who you are... what God’s called you to... zealous for good works... so busy burning for Christ you don’t have the time or energy to invest in your sin.

"The world is booby-trapped. It is rigged for disappointment. On earth everything falls short of some hoped-for ideal. Everything good down here has a tragic brevity and a funny aftertaste to it. It all falls short and shortly falls apart.... Self-pity and self-indulgence, boredom and despair, envy and greed-such are only yearning gone sour. They are just the greasy residue that remains after yearning has gone unfilled too many times. A sadness like ash settles on our doings and our desires. We find trinkets to fiddle with, trivia to distract us. A once burning zeal dwindles to a dry itch, and everything becomes a frantic attempt to get the passion back, or a plodding resignation to its death." Mark Buchanan, *Things Unseen*, P. 50

To keep that burning zeal, stay focused on your calling...

I Peter 2:9-11 “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim that praises of Him who called out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beg you are sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”