

6/20/21 - Sanctification: Put on the Lord Jesus Christ

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[0 : 0 0] instead at Panera next Saturday at, let's do 7 a.m. again. I like that, so we'll do 7 a.m. at Panera next Saturday, so please join us for that. But now I want to transition into the sermon, and hopefully I'm not disappointing you, but I'm not planning on doing a Father's Day-themed message today. However, the message will hopefully be exalting to our Heavenly Father, so in a sense, it is a Father's Day message. But it is a blessing to be back up here. I haven't preached in probably two months now, so I'm always excited and blessed and honored to be able to preach God's Word. But if you've been with us at Metro for a couple years now, you may recall that a year ago, actually, this weekend, we covered John chapter 3, and we talked about the new birth, the work of God in regeneration, the washing and renewal of the believer. And then two months ago, we studied the gospel through Romans 1 verses 1 through 16, and we talked about the work of God in justification, in his atonement for our sin that's accomplished on the cross. And so today, I want to look at sanctification, right? And you may not be familiar with this term sanctification, but oftentimes, we think of salvation that God accomplishes in our lives as happening in three or four sort of unified stages. There's the regeneration that happens at the new birth, justification that happened by Christ on the cross, and then sanctification, which is the work that the Spirit does in our lives. And then finally, there's glorification, which is when we will meet Christ in the clouds and spend eternity with him. And hopefully, Lord willing, we'll have a sermon on glorification here in the next few months. But my aim today is to make simple the idea of sanctification in the life of the regenerate believer, and to help us grow together, as Paul said in Galatians 4 19, into the image of Christ until

Christ is formed in us, right? Now, it was tempting when I was preparing this message to simply read Romans 5 clear through to Romans 8, since it talks at length about this. But I think if we did that, we may get lost in all of the details of Paul's arguments, and we may miss the forest for the trees, as they say. So instead, I want to focus today on a couple of verses, Romans 6 19 through 23.

And you'll see that it speaks of sanctification, and we'll explore these verses, and then we'll dig further into this idea. But let's go ahead and read Romans 6 19 through 23. And you'll see I have 6 19b up there. I'm starting a little ways into verse 19. But if you want to read along, it'll be on the screen. You can also look in your Bibles. Chapter 6, verse 19 reads, For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and 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 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. Amen. Before digging into these verses, I want to take a moment to define this word sanctification if you're not familiar with it. And it comes from the word sanctify, which is a common word used in the New and Old Testament, which refers to set something apart as sacred or holy. And so to be sanctified is to be holy as God is holy, right? Which is, if you want to write a note, discussed in 1 Peter 1.15.

And so a simple definition of sanctification would be the process of having been and being made righteous, or the process of being set apart as sacred or holy. And so this process, it's not complicated, but I think it's tragically misunderstood in our culture and our world today.

[4 : 51] And this problem seems to stem from an incorrect or incomplete understanding of the work of salvation that Christ accomplished on the cross. And so just to kind of give us a warning before we move into the passage of the two errors that so often occur when we seek sanctification. On one side, we have many who are seeking to work out their own sanctification through works rather than faith, right? And this might be through acts of penance or self-denial or self-flagellation, as Paul puts it, right? Which means literally whipping yourself to bring yourself into submission. Martin Luther, before his salvation, he was tormented by this idea. He longed to be righteous before God, but he had no means of achieving it of himself, of bringing himself into submission. But by the grace of God, he discovered Romans 1.17, he discovered the gospel, and he found that his righteousness could only be imputed through Christ's completed work on the cross. And then we see many more who are tempted to acts of righteousness or penitence, motivated by atoning for their own sin, as if we could atone for, pay the price for our own sin.

And this leads to a multitude of legalistic and works-based religions that we see in the world around us, right? But then on the other side, we have the complete opposite, right? We have many who believe that upon a single profession of faith, that they can continue in their sin, that faith or that grace may abound.

And so there's no sanctification, right? And this stems from a misunderstanding of God's plan for sanctification in our lives. And then many others who profess to be Christians, they take hold of this concept of the freedom of conscience that Paul discussed in 1 Corinthians 10, when he was speaking of food offered to idols. And they think that it extends carte blanche, right? Or complete freedom for us to define for ourself what is good and evil, and so to baptize our sin and continue in our sin, right? But I think both of these errors, although they are opposite, are against God's word. They're not his plan or his purpose for sanctification. And so as we look at these verses, I want to expose what is God's plan and his purpose in sanctification. But before we dig into his word, let's open with a prayer, always fitting to pray. Father, we thank you for this opportunity to read your word, to grow in our understanding of you and our love of you, to present our lives to you, Lord, to your work of righteousness and sanctification. I pray that you would give us ears to hear, hearts to understand.

And Lord, that you would guide us to submit to your word. And Lord, so to grow into the image of Christ as is your will for us. We love and praise you and pray this in your holy name. Amen.

So my first point, I titled Slaves to Sin. And I want to look at verse 19 and look at this idea of slaves to sin.

[8 : 24] And so I'll read the verse again, the second part of verse 19. It says, For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, leading to sanctification. And I think the words here are pretty poignant, right? You presented yourself as slaves to sin. It doesn't say you were enslaved to sin as if by some outside force, but rather you presented yourself as slaves to sin. And this led only to further lawlessness.

We, as condemned, we're serving the master of the flesh and this world. And I think that's pretty powerful. Fortunately, Paul doesn't end here. But I think it's so tempting to read verses like Romans 6:19 or Romans 3:23 and conclude that since everyone has fallen short and everyone has sinned, we can't really be held accountable for our sin. It's human nature to sin. And so can we really be accountable for our sin?

And I think I've heard this message a lot in movies and TV shows in the last few years where we conclude, or the writers of the movies conclude, that since all sin and fail one another morally and ethically and otherwise, failure is part of what makes us human. And so we should celebrate our failure. We should learn to coexist with one another. And we're commended for surrendering to sin, for domesticating sin or covering sin, right?

But this isn't what God calls us to. God calls us to kill sin. And so the truth we see in this passage is that we are accountable for our sin before God. Just as Paul said earlier in the same chapter, Romans 6:16, he said, you are slaves of the one whom you obey. The point is not that we were enslaved by sin, and so we blindly obeyed, but rather we presented ourselves as slaves of sin. We stand responsible, regardless of our inclination towards sin that came about in the fall, we stand guilty before God, right? We obeyed our sinful desires and earned the just reward or wages, as Paul says, which is death.

In Romans 8:13, Paul says, if you live according to the flesh, you will die. And I think that this is a reminder that you can't serve two masters. You cannot serve sin and righteousness. It's one or the other.

[11 : 12] Despite all the warnings to the contrary that we find in Romans and Hebrews and Colossians, Corinthians, I think we're still tempted and fail to the same sin and deception that was used in the garden, right? If you want to flip to Genesis 2, verse 16 through 17 in your Bible, I think we'll also have it on the screen. But in Genesis 2, we see God said, you may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. And if you flip down just a couple of verses later to Genesis 3, verse 4, the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die, right? The serpent lied by changing what God said.

And so the first sin was brought about through the lie that sin will not lead to death, right? The temptation that we are fit for ourselves to decide what is good and evil.

We were and continue to be deceived that God overstated the consequences of sin, that he lied. But the reality is, as Paul is making clear and reminding us, that the wages of sin are death, right? How do we know that the wages of sin are death? Well, how many people in history have lived and not died? Maybe two, right? Enoch and Elijah. Save for them, all have died and we too will die.

And that is the consequence of sin, the reality of sin, right? So we know that God did not lie. But again, although it's easy to blame the serpent, right? We can give him his name, the Satan, and blame him for our sin. But it's far more often, as we'll see, our own lust and our own passions that deceive us. We present our slaves, ourselves, as slaves to sin because we believe we can domesticate or cover our sin, right? Or that we can escape its consequences.

Look at Ephesians 5, verses 4 through 5. It says, And Paul continues in the next verse, And we see John in 1 John chapter 3, verses 5 through 7. He echoes the same sentiment, right? I think we'll have it on the screen. You know that he appeared in order to take away sin, and in him there is no sin, referring to Jesus. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning.

[14 : 20] No one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

The reality of sin is shame and a guilty conscience, which leads only to death. But it's only through the abundance, right, of God's grace. The gospel does not end with us dead in our sin.

Right? It doesn't end there. Instead, we're made righteous through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus and commanded, more than that, permitted, made able to present ourselves as slaves to righteousness, which leads to sanctification.

So that's what I want to focus on in my second point, slaves to righteousness. This verse 19 continues, if we read it, the entirety of it.

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.

[15 : 28] Right? Paul is making a contrast here. He's contrasting the willingness and the zeal we had in our pursuit of sin and saying that now, through Christ, we are to have a greater willingness and a greater zeal in our pursuit of righteousness.

That is what we've been empowered to by the work of Christ in us. Paul reinforces this in Romans 12, verse 1 through 2. I like my cross-references, so I've got a few of them.

Paul says in Romans 12, verse 1 through 2, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Nowhere do we see that we define good and evil for ourself.

Instead, it's God, by the renewal of our mind, that teaches us what is good and acceptable and perfect. And I like as well how Paul says this in 2 Corinthians 7, 1.

[16 : 40] Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

We're called, we're commanded to present ourselves as slaves to the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to pursue righteousness with a greater fervency than we once had for sin.

And this goal of sanctification in our life, the life of the believer, is to bring holiness to completion, to be made holy as he is holy. Now, I think for many, although we rejoice in these verses, I think this idea of sanctification, unfortunately, doesn't bring about joy, but instead brings dread and discouragement.

We've heard about sanctification. We've been told our whole life about submitting. But instead, our mind goes to Philippians 2, 12. And I'm sure many of you know this verse.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. I'm sure it's been quoted to you once or twice. Right? And so we find within ourself a conviction by our conscience.

[17 : 52] We're ashamed of our sin. And we're tired and ashamed. And so we ask, why do I keep on sinning? Right? Although we have within ourself a desire to turn from sin, we continue to fail.

That is the reality. But Paul doesn't leave us here. Right? He continues in chapter 7 of Romans. I said I wasn't going to read all of Romans 5, 6, and 7, but I might read a bunch of it.

In Romans 7, Paul says, starting in verse 15, I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

Skipping down a few verses, he says, so I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inner being, but I see in my members another law, waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? He doesn't end there. Instead, he looks, he reminds himself, and he preaches to himself the gospel.

[18 : 57] He says, thanks be to God, only through Christ Jesus our Lord. So then I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

And then he continues. In our Bibles, it's broken, from chapter seven into chapter eight, but the very next verse, I'm sure you know it. Verse one, he says, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

Amen. He empowers us by his spirit to walk according to his law. The reality we face is that we cannot accomplish righteousness on our own.

We cannot create our own righteousness through any act, not in part or the whole. Instead, it's God in Christ who accomplished righteousness on our part.

[20 : 15] This is justification, right? And also sanctification. It's the heart of the gospel. I love these verses. They're so encouraging and exciting and bring about rejoicing and thanksgiving in my heart every time I hear them.

But I think some, some still see a contradiction in these verses, right? Paul's earlier sentiment on one side, he calls us to present ourselves as slaves to righteousness.

But then on the other side, he says that God accomplished righteousness on our part through Christ, that he has sanctified us. So which is it, right? Are we sanctified or are we being sanctified, right?

As I always say to my students, it's not a trick question. The answer is both, right? We are sanctified and we are being sanctified. Just as we're humanly responsible for our sin, we're humanly accountable to submit in sanctification.

We are sanctified in Christ and we are being sanctified through Christ. Look again one more time at Romans 7 verse 25. Paul says, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh, I serve the law of sin.

[21 : 36] He's not contradicting Jesus by saying that he's serving two masters, right? He's not serving sin and serving righteousness. He's saying that despite the real continued desire in his flesh to sin, that by the renewal of his mind and the indwelling Holy Spirit, he is able to, and so he presents himself as a slave of righteousness and serves the law of God.

Whereas he says in Romans 8 verse 4, God in Christ condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

And we see in these verses, it was God in Christ by his spirit that accomplished sanctification. And it is his spirit working in us that brings holiness to completion in those who walk not according to the flesh, but according to his spirit.

Amen. The work of sanctification, we could sum it up as having been made and being made righteous is accomplished and is being accomplished in the life of the believer by the Father, the Spirit, and the Son.

I really love how Hebrews 10:14 says this. By a single offering, he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

[23 : 06] Right? It's almost a contradiction in itself. He has perfected for all time those who are being perfected. And so again, we see that we have been perfected by his work on the cross.

And by his grace, we are being sanctified in this life. We see that the zealous desire within us to grow in righteousness is a free gift that we received at salvation by his spirit.

This is the new birth. When we are regenerate, when we are washed and renewed by his spirit, we receive within ourselves a new spirit, a new heart, which desires righteousness.

And it's empowered by his spirit. And more than the desire, we receive within ourselves the will to obey, which leads to sanctification. And again, this is provided by his spirit, which dwells within us.

Before we move on to the last point, I want to look back at Philippians 2:12, so often quoted, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

[24 : 09] First, we must recognize that fear and trembling to have shame, guilt, and conviction of sin is not bad. It's God's grace that he brings about shame and guilt, conviction of sin, which is meant to lead us to confession and repentance.

repentance. We see the same in 2 Corinthians 7:10. Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret.

That's his purpose in sanctifying us. And so the point of Philippians 2:12 is often misunderstood because we don't read it in its full context. Paul wrote this as an exhortation to the Philippians.

He was leaving them or had left them and wrote them a letter. And told them, in my absence, continue working out your salvation just as zealously as you had in my presence.

But more than that, he continues, right? Got to read verse 13 if you're going to read verse 12. For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

[25 : 18] Amen. It's pleasing to God to grant both the desire and the will in sanctification. We're called to work out our salvation with fear and trembling because this process is heart and spirit, flesh and mind.

And it produces real, evident righteousness in the life of those who by faith submit and present themselves as slaves to righteousness, slaves of our Lord Jesus Christ.

my final point today, I want to focus on the fruit of righteousness as discussed in verses 20 through 23.

This real and evident fruit. So let's look at the last few verses of chapter 6 verse 20 through 22. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

But what fruit were you getting in 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.

[26 : 30] Fruit in regard to both the fruit of sin and the fruit leading to sanctification and eternal life. That's the fruit he's speaking of. So I want to think, how do we produce fruit?

Fruit, right? It doesn't necessarily mean the literal fruit that we eat, but fruit meaning how do we produce that which is good? In the fallen creation in the world that we live in today, fruit is produced by work, right?

There are some places, Venezuela, where my wife's from, where there are many Amazon jungles that you can go and still find fruit growing at great risk to yourself, but it's there.

But in most of the creation, we find fruit takes work, right? As an example, we could think of fruit in terms of exercise or sports, right?

We typically exercise or play sports for physical health or to compete as an athlete. Either way, attaining results or fruit requires great effort along with self-control, discipline, and above all, consistency.

[27 : 39] Paul uses this same illustration in 1 Corinthians 9. We won't read it now, but regarding his practice of self-discipline and control, he compares himself to a great athlete. Maybe you're not an athlete or you don't much care for exercise.

Perhaps you prefer gardening, right? Or farming. In the literal sense, producing fruit, vegetables, requires patience, knowledge, skill, skill, self-control, discipline, consistency, and hard work.

If you've ever done gardening, you know you have to till the soil, plant the seeds, water them, clear weeds, protect them from animals, among many other things. But it is hard work, right?

Although gardening predates the fall, the ground was cursed, and so now it takes work. We have to exert effort to produce fruit. fruit. The point is, fruit requires work, and the same is true of the fruit of the spirit, as discussed in Galatians 5, right?

Specifically verse 22. This process of growing in holiness and the obedience of faith requires self-control and discipline in order that we might crucify the flesh, its passions, and its desires.

[28 : 54] It's hard work. However, we're encouraged God provided his spirit, the will, and he provided the work. But we are called to present ourselves as slaves to righteousness.

We must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, empowered by him. Look again at Romans 6, 21, one of our verses we just read.

What fruit did we gain from serving sin? Although at this time we were free from righteousness, the only abiding satisfaction, the only abiding produce of our sin was shame, self-disgust.

And the only advantage we found, the only lasting advantage, was death and hell, eternal separation from God. That's the fruit of sin, right? However, by the grace of God, his completed work, we're now ashamed of our past sin, right?

The dishonor that it brought to God, the pain it caused our conscience, and the killing of our bodies. In utter contrast, as Paul continues, we are now slaves to God and slaves to righteousness.

[30 : 04] The fruit produced in and through us is the fruit of holiness, of righteousness. This fruit leads to sanctification and to eternal life. We have been made holy through faith in Christ, and in fulfillment of his many promises, holiness is being made complete in us.

before we close, I want to spend a couple minutes looking at why we present ourselves as slaves of righteousness. What is the heart or the change in our heart that drives us to hard work, to self-discipline, to growth in sanctification?

When it came to exercise or gardening, we devoted ourselves to these difficult tasks because we desired the fruit. Maybe we desired to be healthier, to be a great athlete, or maybe we wanted a garden with award-winning fruit, or maybe we just enjoy the peace and quiet that comes from gardening.

Right? Perhaps our desires were less pure. Maybe we wanted to be praised for our athleticism, or maybe we wanted our garden to catch people's attention and bring praise to us.

However, a little bit off topic, we need to remember we're called to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Right? In all that we do, we are to give thanks to God the Father through him, as said in Colossians 3.17.

[31 : 30] But as for sanctification, why do we do these works in order to grow in sanctification? Jesus said in Matthew 6.21, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The same is true of sanctification. We present ourselves as slaves of righteousness because we desire God. We desire to be holy and acceptable before God.

Look back at Romans 12.1. We read it a few minutes ago. Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

I think that's the key. Sanctification is our spiritual worship. We worship God in presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, being made holy and acceptable before him.

John Piper said, the essence of worship is the heart's experience of affections or love that magnify the beauty and worth of God.

[32 : 37] Therefore, we present ourselves as slaves of righteousness, not to achieve our own righteousness or to atone for our sin, but as an act of obedience, of faith, of worship, of thankfulness, and an overflow of praise which magnifies the beauty and the worth of God.

Amen. So let's look at the final verse that we read today, Romans 6, 23. And Paul says, the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I want to note the contrast here. Wages of sin, death. Free gift of God, eternal life. Wages here means a reward, pay, or salary that we earn and deserve death as the penalty for our sin.

However, eternal life in Christ Jesus is a free gift, a redundant phrase, but I like that it's translated, free gift. We do not earn it. We do not deserve it.

It's simply an act of grace, and we receive it only by faith in the completed work of Christ. Paul makes it clear the motive for presenting ourselves as slaves is because we desire eternal life in Christ and to worship and delight in him for eternity.

[34 : 01] Until that day, when we're presented to him holy and blameless, our worship and our obedience in this life are an overflow of his grace and our faith.

And this is so because we have been set free from the law by Christ, as Paul said in Romans 8, right? And in so, we've been empowered by him to obey the law. We are free from it and empowered to obey it.

We receive God's free gift of grace and the glorious liberation to be holy and be made holy, right? Along with the insurance that sin no longer has dominion over us.

How tragic would it be to squander the free gift of righteousness, a gift purchased with the blood of Christ? In closing, I want to look at the practical means of sanctification.

I want to look at how God brings about sanctification in our lives. What are the means of sanctification in this life? First, godly grief and remorse require that we be broken by our sin.

[35 : 14] We read 2 Corinthians 7.10 earlier. Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

The work of sanctification produces within us a broken and contrite heart followed by confession, repentance. Confession requires that we come into agreement with God regarding our sin.

We stand accused and we agree, Father, I have sinned. We repent, we turn from and forsake our sin. John MacArthur says, you have not done your duty with regard to killing sin until you have confessed it and forsaken it.

And I know I'm talking a lot about sin, but sin is the opposite of righteousness. If we are to grow in righteousness, we must forsake our sin. We can't coexist with sin.

We cannot simply cover sin. It didn't work for Adam and Eve. It didn't work for Cain. It didn't work for David. It hasn't worked for anyone else and it won't work for you. We can't tame or domesticate our sin.

[36 : 22] It will consume us. It will kill us. Sin and lawlessness only lead to more sin and lawlessness. And more than that, the devil prowls about like a lion seeking who he might destroy.

Don't be deceived. by your sinful desires or the enemy's lies. The wages of sin are death. The deeds of the body must be put to death by the spirit.

And so I'm going to list five ways that we can grow in sanctification by killing sin in our lives. And there are a couple of cross-references in here, but you can write the notes down and look at them throughout the week if you'd like.

But I will read them. I just want to warn you that there are several. I'm borrowing these five from a sermon by John MacArthur from back when I was three years old that I read this week and thoroughly enjoyed.

And it's called Hacking Agag to Pieces. And he talks about killing sin. Hacking Agag to Pieces. And he gives these five ways that we can kill sin that I think are so applicable to our lives.

[37 : 35] First, we must abstain from fleshly lusts. And this comes from Scripture. You must stop lust, right, that is covetous desire, if you're going to kill sin in your life and present yourself as a slave to righteousness.

I think we see this most clearly in 1 Peter 2, 11. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners in exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul.

James echoes the same in 1 chapter verse 14 through 15. I won't read them now, but it's the same idea. The most straightforward way to resist sin is to stop lusting after sin.

How do we do this? Well, as Paul makes clear, we make no provision for the flesh. In Romans 13, 14, he says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

Right? The means of killing sin are practical and real. They're self-control and self-discipline, all empowered by his spirit.

[38 : 47] If you're prone to temptation, don't fill your mind with the things that tempt you. Wage war on the temptations of your mind. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

I think sometimes it's easiest to simply remove the physical things from our life that lead us to temptation so much as it is possible. For example, I struggle with junk food.

If it's around, I'll eat it, such as those fruit snacks on the back table back there. Right? But in all seriousness, whatever tempts us, so much as it is possible in God, remove it from your life.

As Jesus said in Mark 9, 43, if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. Keep yourself accountable. Surround yourself by those who keep you accountable.

Right? Grow in self-control. Learn to control your life like a great athlete. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9, 25 through 27, every athlete exercises self-control in all things.

[39 : 56] They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable eternal life. So do not run aimlessly, skipping down. But I discipline my body and keep it under control lest after preaching to others, I myself should be disqualified.

He calls us to real and practical self-control and self-discipline. But these two on their own are not enough. We need the last three. Number three, fixate your life on Christ.

You will inevitably become that which you worship. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Right? Don't be satisfied until you awake in the likeness of Jesus.

We studied this in Colossians 3, 1 through 4 a few years ago. If you, if then, you have been raised with Christ. Seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on the things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him.

[41 : 03] Glory. Set your minds on the things that are above. To do this, we find number four. Meditate on God's word. Meditate on God's word.

Treasure the word of God. David said in Psalm 1, the righteous, his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night.

In Psalm 119, starting in verse 9, he says, how can a young man keep his ways pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you.

Let me not wander from your commandments. I have stored up your word in my heart that I may not sin against you. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.

I will delight in your statutes. I will not forget your word. And finally, through that, it powers our constant prayer.

[42 : 02] Number five, pray without ceasing. We studied this a few weeks ago in 1 Thessalonians 5. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Remember the Lord's prayer. Lead us not into temptation. Pray that you not be tempted. Remember the prayer of Psalm 19, verse 13 through 14.

Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight.

Oh Lord, my rock, my redeemer. Amen. let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for your sanctifying work that you accomplished on the cross. And Lord, that you are accomplishing in our lives as we submit to you, enabled only by your spirit to grow in sanctification, to grow in sanctification, to grow in righteousness, to pursue you until we are transformed into the image of Christ and then we will spend eternity worshipping you.

[43 : 27] Father, I pray that we would continue to lift up our prayer to you without ceasing. Lord, in all circumstances that we would give thanks. Lord, we long to worship you.

We desire you and to desire to be made like you. We love and praise you and pray these things in your holy name. Amen. Please, please stand up with us.