

...one will...
Flee from sexual immorality.^d
All other sins a man commits are
outside his body, but he who sins
sexually sins against his own
body.^e 19 Do you not know that
your body is a temple^f of the Holy
Spirit, who is in you, whom you
have received from God? You are
not your own;^g 20 you were bought
at a price.^h Therefore honor God

6:19
/ Jn 2:21
e Ro 14:7,8
6:20
Ac 20:28;
1Co 7:23;
1Pe 1:18,19;
Rev 5:9
7:1
iver 8,26
7:3
Ex 21:10;
1Pe 3:7
7:5

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Colossians 3:5–6

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

Reflection

I once started a sermon with these words ‘I am not unfamiliar with adultery’. As you can imagine, I instantly had everyone’s

attention in the room! ‘I am not unfamiliar with adultery.’ I followed them up with these words, ‘And if you are honest with yourself; neither are you.’ After all, Jesus says,

‘I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.’

Which means, according to Jesus, we’re all guilty of sexual sin. Paul says to Timothy,

‘Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.’

Can you honestly say that you always do

this? I certainly can't.

Job in Job 31 said:

'I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.'

I've prayed this as well. How about you? But honestly, even if this is your standard, who amongst us isn't a covenant breaker?

Paul says to the Romans:

21 you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?

Paul might as well be asking that question of me right now. Or of you.

King David, warrior, psalmist, prophet, a hero of the faith, Israel's greatest king, a man after God's own heart; he committed adultery with Bathsheba.

King Solomon, the wisest man to walk the earth, his downfall? – foreign women. Solomon's great work of wisdom was the book of Proverbs. If you ever study it thematically you find out that 10% of the book of Proverbs is warnings about adultery; but Solomon, like his father David, still succumbed.

What's the lesson? Sexual sin is dangerous; it's deadly. Which is why Paul tells us to put it to death in today's passage from

Colossians 3:5–6,

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

Paul's just encouraged the Colossians to set their minds and hearts on things above, not on earthly things which are filled with vain hopes, distractions, pitfalls and snares. Today Paul follows naturally on, taking aim at some of the most deadly snares of our earthly nature, the most potent temptations and traps that lure our hearts and minds away from Christ. The two that come first to mind for Paul are sexual sin and greed; but mainly sexual

sin.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

Put to death sexual sin: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires. Oh, and, greed, which is idolatry. Now it's not like Paul's saying here that greed isn't a huge problem in ancient society, our society, or in any society. Greed is always a problem. It's just that sexual sin is a far bigger, more insidious problem, that causes the enslavement, downfall and misery of so many more people. And, as the book of Proverbs points out, sexual sin, or adul-

tery as the Bible often calls it, results not just in lowering our gaze from Jesus to the twisted and self-destructive desires of our sinful hearts, but far worse, sexual sin results in death. That's the message of Proverbs over and over again. Adultery leads to death; we either put sexual sin to death, or it puts us and others to death.

This may sound overblown. Surely I'm exaggerating to make a point, right? But I'm not. According to Scripture and the evidence all around us sexual sin leads to death. Here's just a few verses from Proverbs,

16 Wisdom will save you also from
the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with
her seductive words,

17 who has left the partner of her youth

and ignored the covenant she made before God.

18 Surely her house leads down to death

and her paths to the spirits of the dead.

19 None who go to her return

or attain the paths of life. Prov 2:16-19

but another man's wife preys on your very life. Prov 6:26

24 Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say.

25 Do not let your heart turn to her ways

or stray into her paths.

26 Many are the victims she has brought down;

her slain are a mighty throng.

27 Her house is a highway to the grave,

leading down to the chambers of death. Prov 7:24-27

Scripture is clear that sexual sin leads to death. And so is the world around us, for those who have eyes to see. The billion dollar pornography industry, women stepping off computer screens and into gaol cells; sex trafficking and slavery in the history of the world has never seen numbers like these. Sexual sin leads to death. Then there's sex outside of marriage (adultery) which leads to unplanned pregnancies and abortions; some 100,000 unborn babies put to death each year in Australia. Sexu-

al sin leads to death. Then there's my old neighbour's best friend. An affair in the office, his wife found out. She left home and took the kid's and wouldn't come back. It hit him so hard that he took his own life. Sexual sin leads to death.

Which means if we don't put it to death; it will put us to death, or someone else, or both. Colossians 3:5,

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

Sexual sin in all its forms is deadly; both in this life and in the next. Because of sex-

ual sin, and other sins like it, the wrath of God is coming. God will not leave sexual sin unpunished. Judgment is sure, and outside of Jesus Christ it won't end well. But even for believers, there is no better, sure-fire way to ruin your life than to succumb to sexual sin. That's why Paul goes here first. What's most likely to tear our gaze way from Jesus and ruin any chance of setting our hearts and minds on things above? Sexual sin. What's the easiest way to ruin your life and your ministry? Sexual sin. 'Put it to death', Paul urges us in the strongest terms.

Think & Pray

Spend some time with the Lord today meditating over this passage and your own personal struggles in this area. Con-

fess your sins to him. And thank him for his abundant forgiveness that is completely sufficient, and freely yours, in Jesus.

It may be that you are living with residual guilt because of sexual sin in your past. Pray today that God would enable you to let this guilt go, that you would forgive yourself completely, just as he has forgiven you completely because of Jesus. In Christ, you are a new creation, the old has gone, the new is here, and when God looks at you now, he sees the righteousness of his Son. In God's eyes you are as pure as snow, without spot or blemish, forgiven forever, and forever holy in his sight – may it be so in your eyes too with all your gratitude going to Jesus.

But we can still fall and regress into sex-

ual sin that entangles so many Christians and causes so many Christian families and communities deep and lasting grief. So also, pray against temptation today. Thank God that we can say 'no' to sexual temptation, that we're no longer slaves to sin. Pray that God would deliver us from evil and temptation today; in the workplace, online, in our existing relationships and even as we walk down the street where our eyes are so prone to wander. And pray for lasting change, that we might put sexual immorality to death forever by the power of the Holy Spirit.