

PUT TO DEATH SEXUAL SIN
Colossians 3:5
By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Sexual sin is rampant in our culture.
 - i. According to a 2005 report by the LA Times, 50% of married people have had affairs.
 - ii. According to the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 17% of men and women admit to having an affair with a brother-in-law or sister-in-law.
 - iii. The same study found that 74% of men and 68% of women said they would commit adultery if they could be guaranteed they would never get caught.
 - iv. The rate of cohabitation – “living together” – has increased fourteen-fold since 1970.
 - v. A study in 2017 reported that 46% of high school students have had sex, and 70% of college students (Jeff Myers, *Secret Battle of Ideas*, 2017).
 - vi. As many as 1 out of every 4 online searches are for porn. Every second, 300,000 people are viewing pornography. The average age of first exposure is just 11.
2. Of all the sins that are plaguing our country, sexual sin may be the most devastating. It is leading to unwanted pregnancies, which often leads to abortion. It leads to sexually transmitted diseases, such as AIDS. It destroys marriages and families.
3. Sexual sin not only affects the non-Christian community. It is destroying the Christian community, all the way to the top. Many churches have been damaged by sexual abuse. Many Christian pastors have fallen into sexual sin, wrecking their ministry, tearing their churches apart, and tarnishing church’s witness in the world.

II. TEXT

1. **Colossians 3:5-11** “5 Therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, God’s wrath is coming upon the disobedient, 7 and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. 8 But now, put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator. 11 In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.”
2. Verse 2 says to set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. Then in verses 5-11 Paul gives us what is called a vice list – a list of eleven vices. And the command for Christians is to put these vices to death. The first four vices are sexual in nature: Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desire. That’s more than one-third. So this morning we are going to focus on verse 5, specifically the first four vices, or putting sexual sin to death.
3. Before we can focus on putting sexual sin to death, we need to understand God’s plan for sex.

III. GOD'S PLAN FOR SEX

1. God made it, so it is good.

- i. There have been Christians in past generations that taught that sex was evil. That the only permissible reason for sex was for procreation. Not true.
- ii. **Genesis 1:31** "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed."
- iii. Sex is good. It is a good thing because it is a God thing.

2. God made it only for marriage (the union of one man and one woman for a lifetime).

- i. **Hebrews 13:4** "Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers."
- ii. God tells us to honor marriage. To value marriage. To treat it as very important. How? By keeping all sex within marriage. Avoid sexual immorality – pre-marital sex; and adultery – extra-marital sex.
- iii. Sex has three purposes within marriage:
 1. Procreation. **Genesis 1:28** God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth."
 2. Intimacy. **Genesis 1:25** "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh."
 - a. First comes marriage – "bonds with his wife." Then comes sex – "and they become one flesh."
 - b. Notice that term the Bible uses for sex here – becoming one flesh.
 - c. Sex creates a "one-flesh union" between two people. It is meant to be a bonding experience unlike any other. Regular sexual intercourse is meant to foster closeness, oneness, intimacy between the husband and wife. Sex is not just physical, but emotional. It strengthens the marriage.
 3. Enjoyment. **Proverbs 5:18-19** "Let your fountain be blessed, and take pleasure in the wife of your youth. A loving deer, a graceful doe – let her breasts satisfy you; be lost in her love forever."

3. All sexual activity outside of marriage is against God's will.

- i. We already established this with Hebrews 13:4. "Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers."
- ii. But in Colossians 3:5 Paul gets even more specific. He places all sexual sin into four categories.
- iii. **Colossians 3:5** "Therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire"
- iv. Four Types of Sexual Sins
 1. Sexual immorality. (Gk, *porneia*). Sometimes translated "fornication." Usually it refers to every kind of sexual activity outside of marriage. But in this passage, since Paul uses four different words to define sexual sin, he may have meant something narrower, more

specific, such as all sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Illicit sexual intercourse.

2. Impurity. (Gk, *akatharsia*). Other Bible versions translate this word as uncleanness, lewdness. Paul may have been referring to all sinful physical sexual acts other than intercourse. Masturbation, petting, erotic massages, oral sex, sex-dolls, etc. Illicit sexual acts other than intercourse.
3. Lust. (Gk, *pathos*). This is not the same word “lust” that Jesus uses in the Sermon on the Mount, when He talks about looking at a woman lustfully. This Greek word originally meant “suffering.” It’s where we get the medical term “pathology,” the study of disease. Over time the pathos came to mean depraved passion (WEB), or unnatural desire (NMB). This is the word that Paul uses in Romans 1 when he talks about homosexuality. Romans 1:26-27 “For this reason God delivered them over to disgraceful passions [pathos].” Their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. Their men in the same way also left natural relations with women and were inflamed in their lust for one another.” So Paul may have been referring to unnatural sexual activity, such as homosexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, incest, etc. Unnatural sexual activity.
4. Evil desire. (Gk, *epithumia*). This is the same Greek word that Jesus used in Matthew 1:28 when he talks about looking at a woman lustfully, and thereby committing adultery in the heart. So Paul may have been referring to mental sexual sin, such as pornography, strip clubs, video-sex, phone-sex, sexual fantasies, girl-watching. Illicit mental sexual activity.
- v. We are not sure if this is exactly what Paul meant with each of these terms, but it does not matter. We know that Bible forbids all sexual activity outside of marriage – physical, mental, emotional, visual, etc. All sexual sin is captured under the term *porneia*, or sexual immorality (fornication).
- vi. These sinful sexual behaviors must be “put to death.”
 1. KJV, mortify.
 2. **John MacArthur** “This refers to the conscious effort to slay the remaining sin in our flesh.”
 3. **ESV Study Bible** “The language of putting to death indicates that Christians have to take severe measures to conquer sin. Watchfulness and prayerfulness against it will be the first steps, with self-discipline following.”
 4. **William Barclay** “The NT never hesitates to demand with a certain violence the complete elimination of everything which is against God.”
 5. **William Barclay** “What Paul is saying is, ‘Put to death every part of yourself which is against God and keeps you from fulfilling His will.’”

IV. NINE REASONS TO KILL SEXUAL SIN

- 1. It destroys marriage.**
 - i. Marriage is meant to last for life. Nothing is to break it. Matthew 19:6 “Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.” But there is one thing that is powerful enough to destroy a marriage. There is one exception that God allows for divorce. Sexual sin. Matthew 19:9 “I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery.”
 - ii. Sexual sin is so serious that it is the one exception for divorce and remarriage.
 - iii. A marriage can survive sexual sin; but many do not.
- 2. It violates your marriage vows.**
 - i. When you get married, you make a vow before God and men to be sexually faithful to your spouse. A vow of sexual exclusivity. It is the most serious of promises. Sexual sin is the breaking of this promise. It is the ultimate act of unfaithfulness and dishonesty.
- 3. It breaks your spouse’s heart.**
 - i. Even if your marriage survives sexual sin, it still breaks your spouse’s heart. There is nothing worse you can do to your spouse than to cheat. Sexual sin is the ultimate act of betrayal.
- 4. It hurts children.**
 - i. The best place for a child to grow up is with a married mom and dad. Sexual sin threatens this.
 - ii. Sexual sin often leads to divorce.
 - iii. Sexual sin often leads to children born out of wedlock. As of 2013, 40% of babies born in the US were born outside of marriage.
 - iv. “Children from divorced or never-married homes are more likely to die in infancy, more likely to get divorced themselves or become unwed parents later in life, more likely to live in poverty, more likely to fail in school, less likely to graduate from college and get a good job, less likely to be in good physical health, more likely to abuse drugs as teens and adults, have lower life expectancies, have higher rates of mental illness, be at greater risk of suicide and child abuse—and on and on.” (Breakpoint.org, “Take a Stand for Marriage)
- 5. It spreads diseases.**
 - i. As of 2014, the CDC reported that 110 million Americans have an STD at any given time – more in women than in men.
 - ii. Nearly 20 million cases of STD infections are reported each year.
 - iii. Fifty percent of new infections occur in young people from the ages of 15-24.
 - iv. In the 1950s there were only two significant STDs – syphilis and gonorrhea – both of which are treatable with penicillin. Now there are more than twenty-four STDs, with half having no cure. (Jeff Myers, *Battle of Ideas*, 2017, p. 55)
- 6. It leads to personal misery.**
 - i. **1 Corinthians 6:13** “the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”

- ii. **1 Corinthians 6:18** “Flee sexual immorality! Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the person who is sexually immoral sins against his own body.”
- iii. Your body wasn’t made for sexual sin. When you do things with your body that it is not meant to do, it leads to sadness and suffering.
- iv. Sexual sin leads to the misery of a guilty conscience – the pain of knowing that you have done something wrong.
- v. Sexual sin leads to a lower self-esteem. It makes you feel worse about yourself. That you are less valuable.
- vi. Studies show that engaging in sex prior to marriage is closely connected with depression (Jeff Myers, *Secret Battle of Ideas*, 2017, p. 55).

7. It is addictive.

- i. According to neuroscientists, porn is addictive in the same way that many drugs are. And when something becomes, that means it is very difficult to stop, even when you realize that it is destroying you and you want to stop.
- ii. Addictions are very dangerous because they are usually progressive. What used to satisfy you now only makes you desire something stronger. Eventually the porn addict ends up doing shameful things that he never dreamed he was capable of doing.

8. It hurts your future marriage.

- i. Research shows that pre-marital sex is closely connected to sexual unfaithfulness and marital disruption (Jeff Myers, *Secret Battle of Ideas*, 2017, p. 55). In other words, engaging in pre-marital sex increases that chances that you will cheat on your spouse and have marriage trouble.
- ii. Cohabitation does the same thing. According to sociologist Glenn T. Stanton, Cohabiting couples have a 50-80 percent higher likelihood of divorce than non-cohabiting couples.
- iii. Marriage is hard enough as it is. Don’t make it harder.

9. It hurts your walk with God.

- i. It separates you from God. You cannot have an intimate relationship with God when there is unconfessed sin in your life. Ps 15:1-2
- ii. It offends God. All sin offends God, even more so those that are destructive to the family. Heb 13:4
- iii. It invites God’s discipline. If you are God’s child, He will discipline you when you go astray. Hebrews 12:5
- iv. It ruins your witness. Colossians 4:5 “Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time.” Sexual sin defames the name of Christ.
- v. It disqualifies you for church leadership. Titus 1:6 “An elder must be blameless: the husband of one wife....”

V. ILLUSTRATION: SEX IS LIKE FIRE

- 1. Sex is like fire. Fire is a good thing, when it is kept in the fireplace. But if it gets out of the fireplace it will destroy the house. Sex is a good thing when it is kept in the marriage. But if it is taken out of marriage, then it becomes a destructive force.

VI. HOW TO KILL SEXUAL SIN

1. Make a commitment to chastity.

- i. To save all sexual activity for marriage.
- ii. **1 Thessalonians 4:3** “For this is God’s will, your sanctification: that you keep away from sexual immorality,”

2. Take every measure necessary to be pure.

- i. **ESV Study Bible** “The language of putting to death indicates that Christians have to take severe measures to conquer sin.”
- ii. **Matthew 5:29-30** “29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”
- iii. You cannot tolerate sexual sin. You must declare war. You must nuke it, or it will nuke you.

3. Killing Mental Sexual Sin:

- i. Only think pure thoughts.
 - 1. **Romans 13:14** “Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”
 - 2. Meditate on Scripture when you are tempted.
- ii. Only look at pure things.
 - 1. **Job 31:1** (ICB) “But I made an agreement with my eyes not to look with desire at a girl.”
 - 2. Bounce your eyes.

4. Killing Physical Sexual Sin:

- i. Married People:
 - 1. Never be alone with the opposite sex.
 - 2. Avoid close friendships with the opposite sex.
 - 3. Don’t confide in a person of the opposite sex about your marriage problems.
 - 4. Nurture your marriage. Fan the flames of your romance.
 - 5. Avoid temptation.
 - a. Jobs that require a lot of traveling.
 - b. Separate bank accounts.
 - c. Hobbies that often take you away.
- ii. Single people.
 - 1. Don’t date until you are ready for marriage.
 - 2. Only date committed Christians.

VII. WHAT IF YOU COMMIT SEXUAL SIN?

1. It is not an unforgivable sin.

- i. The only unforgiveable sin is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which is a hardened opposition to the truth that the Spirit revealing to you. Mt 12:31-32

2. Don’t try to cover your sin by committing a greater sin.

- i. King David killed Uriah to hide his adultery with Bathsheba.

- ii. Such as abortion.

3. Repent.

- i. **1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- ii. What does it mean to confess our sins?
 - 1. Admit your sin by name.
 - 2. Apologize – be sorry.
 - 3. Affirm your commitment to obedience moving forward.
 - 4. Ask for forgiveness.

VIII. CONCLUSION

- 1. Sexual sin highly accessible. It is all around us. This makes it very tempting.
- 2. But sexual is also highly destructive.
- 3. Put it to death.