

VII. Colossians  
*The Preeminence and Prominence of Jesus Christ*  
“The Formula for Sanctification!”  
Colossians 3:1-14  
Bruce Stallings  
August 6, 2023 • Sunday Evening Sermon

We are in Colossians 3 and as we get here there is a little bit of a shift. In the first two chapters there some deep theology. Then all of a sudden in Colossians 3 Paul shifts into what I call a lab passage. What do I mean by a lab passage? When I was in college, most of the classes you took were in lecture format. You sat down, you received information and you were given a test. When you have a class that has a lab to it, you actually get your hands dirty because you are actually going to do something. So in this lab passage it's not just, can we come up with a life takeaway out of this for you to carry with you for you have not studied this passage if you don't do something. This is a call to action. As a matter of fact, it's a call to multiple actions and every bit of this is founded upon what he has previously said to them.

In order to set this up at the end of Colossians 2 there's a question there that if we have a particular mindset, then it should cause us to want to know an answer. Now, that mindset is that we are frustrated Christians. I think until Christ returns, at some level, we should be frustrated Christians. I might even argue that we should be frustrated Christians in increasing measure, but frustrated at what? I think of the heroes of the faith that that spoke and talked about their relationship with the Lord. Paul makes a statement that he doesn't understand what he does because the very things he wants to do, he does not do, and the things that he does not want to do, he does. In fact, that is the testimony of a believer.

In order to explain that perspective away, many people have said, “Paul must have been referring back to before he became a Christian, because that's not the testimony of a believer.” I'll be honest with you, it's mine, for the very things I want to do seem like the hardest things to do sometimes, to just be consistent in prayer, to spend time in the Word, to choose to walk the way of the Lord instead of the way of the world. That the very things I want to do seem like some of the hardest things to do and the very things that I shouldn't do, it's like I can do them without a thought. I can just respond, terribly, self-centeredly, without even a thought. Why are the things I'm supposed to do so hard and why are the things I don't want to do so easy?

That was the question that that Paul had and I believe that's the question that as we mature and grow in our relationship with the Lord, we become more cognizant of who the Lord is, more cognizant of who Jesus is, but we also become more cognizant of what a great sinner we are so we struggle at a different level. We struggle at an increasing level. So if we have that perspective that we want to know how we can not necessarily be sinless, we know the answer to that, right? Come quickly, Lord Jesus. That's the answer to us being sinless and we will be sinless when He either takes me home or comes back. But how can we sin less?

At the end of Colossians 2, Paul makes a statement right after he has just described to them all these works that false teachers were telling people in order to earn the favor of the Lord. These teachers are trying to give them a gospel based upon works. We don't do those things in order to be saved. We do those things because we are saved but these false teachers have come up with all these weird, odd, highly committed things that if they perform at a certain level of beating your body and going through these different ceremonies and different things, then God might love you, then you can have a relationship with the Lord.

Paul summarizes them in Colossians 2:23 which says *[23] These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.* Someone who is willing to do those things, to live in this way differently than the world, to beat their body, certainly have an appearance of wisdom. Of course they do for that person is committed to something. It may be the wrong thing, but they're a highly committed person to something but Paul says they have an appearance of wisdom, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. If this book were being read, I would raise my hand at that point.

Paul just basically summarized why all those things are no good to them and tells them the reason they're no good is they appear to make you look better, but they can't do the very thing that you most need. What is the very thing that they most need? It is to stop the indulgence of the flesh. So, I would raise my hand and say, 'Paul, would you please tell us then how do you stop the indulgent flesh?' So if you have the mindset tonight of a Paul; the very thing I want to do I don't do and the very things I don't want to do, seems too easy to do or the mindset of wishing you could sin less and you're frustrated when you have to ask the Lord to forgive you of same sin yet again, then you want to know how to stop the indulgence of the flesh or want to know if it is possible to stop the indulgence of the flesh.

This is where we get to Colossians 3:1-14 which says *[1] If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [2] Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. [3] For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4] When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

*[5] Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. [6] On account of these the wrath of God is coming. [7] In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. [8] But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. [9] Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices [10] and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. [11] Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.*

*[12] Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, [13] 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. [14] And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

The word that we use to describe the stopping of the indulgence of the flesh or stopping the indulgent flesh is contained under this category of sanctification. Any time we think of sanctification, it would be good to remind ourselves that there are two aspects that we think about. Justification is an event that God does. In other words, it's just God doing it. He doesn't need our help. He doesn't use us. We have nothing to offer. We're dead in our trespasses. He justifies us. He pardons us. You can't pardon yourselves. God declares you innocent. You will never be re pardoned. You will never be unjustified. Once you are justified, you can't be more justified or better justified. You are justified in Christ, end of story. If you continue to breathe after you become a Christian, if it's not your last breath, then you're going to need to be sanctified because you're going to sin again.

So, you are justified but now you need to be sanctified and you begin this process. This is a synergistic process. This is something we work together with the Holy Spirit. God says for every single believer He places His Holy Spirit in their life and He does this work that He began. Philippians 1:6 says *[6] And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.* This work that He begins, starts when He places His Holy Spirit in our life to sanctify us, to make us holy. We work together with the Holy Spirit to do this.

Paul, very wisely, is about to explain sanctification. He starts by saying if then you have been raised with Christ, which basically means if you are a true believer. Now why is that important? It's important because if you're not a true believer and you try to do what he's about to tell you to do, to put off and to put on, one, you will be incapable of doing it in your own ability and two if you try to do it without the work of the Holy Spirit in your life, you will simply deceive yourself. Many people have and are deceiving themselves by the works that they're doing of putting off and putting on, but they don't have the Holy Spirit inside of them. They are not a true believer. That is why that unbelievably terrifying passage screams out of Scriptures from Matthew 7, that many will come to Me on that Day and say, Lord, Lord, and I'll say, Depart from Me I never knew you. They did not have a personal relationship with the Lord and they don't have the presence of the Holy Spirit inside of their life.

Paul goes on to say if you are a true believer, then you have been raised with Christ. Now there's a point that He's trying to make there. This means that you were dead before you became a true believer and a true believer needs to always remember that they started dead in their trespasses and sin. So if you have been raised with Christ that dead life is over and done with; every aspect of it. Do not fall into the trap that I have spent years wrestling with of I want to redeem the good out of the previous Bruce. I should have learned real quickly there is no good in the previous Bruce for I am a new creation.

If you've been raised with Christ, you're a new creation therefore you are to seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. When He says we're to seek the things above, He goes on and explains how to seek the things that are above and that is you set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth. He's telling us to fix our eyes on Jesus as you set your mind on the things that are above. What is in heaven? We know there is no sin in heaven. All that's in heaven is righteousness and holiness. God is in heaven. Jesus is in heaven. This is not a complicated, deep theological question. Set your minds on the things of Christ, on the things of God, Set your mind on righteousness and holiness. Seek out those things. Make an intentional effort to set your mind on those things.

If I were a racehorse, I would be a racehorse that had to have those blinders on. Do you ever notice that in a horse race, some of the horses have to wear these blinders, these cups on their eyes? The reason that those horses have to wear the cups around their eyes is because they get easily distracted by anything to the left or to the right and they need to focus on what's ahead, not what is beside them. I'm way too easily distracted by what's going on over here and what's going on over here. When Paul says to set your mind on the things that are above and not on the things of Earth, it's a really simple statement, but it can be really hard to do because, even with blinders on, just outside these blinders, it's real loud and appealing. The magnet pull sometimes seems insurmountable to want to be like whatever this world is doing over here, to want to be included in, to not want to be excluded from them. There is a lot of draw. Paul's step one is to set your mind on the things that are above and not on the things of this earth.

I'm a very practical person probably to a fault. My wife, Sonya would say there's no probably. So I get down to am I setting my mind on the things that are above and not all the things of Earth? I don't know. Do I know more about Jesus? Do I know more about Heaven? Do I know more about the teachings of the New Testament and the teachings of the Old Testament than I know about a TV show series, name every character, know every episode? Do I know more about Auburn or Alabama football? Am I more concerned about who's going to be the next quarterback for Auburn or Alabama this year or am I just waiting to hear that or am I over here trying to find another nugget, something out of the Holy Scriptures? I have to get real practical with myself because I can get lured into thinking as long as I have a good worship experience and spend a fair enough amount of time with the Lord, it becomes acceptable to me, but I'm not sure I could say that I have set my mind, focused my mind on seeking the things that are above. Paul begins with what is your intentional focus each and every day? Where's your focus? Are you setting your mind on the things of Christ, on the things that are above and not on the things of this earth?

Paul's step two is in Colossians 3:5 which begins, *[5] Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:* He gives two lists in this Colossians passage, and I'll go ahead and forewarn you. The sister passage to this is Ephesians 4 which we'll look at in a minute but none of these lists are comprehensive. These are get-you-started lists. The category of these lists is anything and everything that is of this earth. You are to not set it aside, simply try to avoid, but you are to put to death. We call this the mortification of sin, put to death whatever the these things are – anything and everything that is earthly put it to death, completely get it out of your life.

Paul gives a list then to get you started and it's a bad list because it includes, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry. The one that really gets me, that makes me have to think about, is covetousness. Now, I'm not necessarily confessing covetousness, although I'm coming very close, but covetousness is desiring anything that the Lord has not intended for me is for me to covet. The Lord and I don't always agree on His will and certainly not on His time. There's often times that I desire things that the Lord has not delivered to me and I covet them. I want them to work my way. I desire for them and I cross a line. You're probably thinking "Yes but can't we offer our request up to the Lord?" We can in the right way. I'm just telling you, sometimes I don't do it in the right way. I really am saying I want it to be done my way – covetousness, that's a challenge for me. Paul says to put it to death for the wrath of God is coming and there will be judgment of God in these things.

Then Paul reminds them that in these you too once walked, when you were living in them. This is written to Christians and Paul tells them to remember, before their life in Christ, you used to walk in these things, but that life is dead and not to be resurrected. That life and all that goes with that life is to be mortified, but you're not to walk in them anymore and they must be put away (Colossians 3:8) as he adds to the list anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices, put on the new self, which has been renewed and knowledge after the image of its creator. So he's given these lists of these things that we are to put to death, to get out of our life, so that we don't focus upon those things and engage in all of those things.

How do you go about putting them to death? I think there are two key words. There could be multiple steps in doing this, because I think there's a lot of practical things sometimes, we don't think about. The first word is confession. Confession is very simply acknowledgment. It is agreeing with God that something is in my life and it is sin. As I John 1:9 says 'if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

The struggle that we have, which is somewhat ironic to me as a practical kind of realistic person, is that we have such a hard time confessing our sin before the Lord. I'll say it a different way. We have a hard time telling someone something He already knows even more than we know it. He knows everything we've done, everything we've thought, and we have a hard time saying 'yes, I have thought that' when the answer to us confessing it, is predetermined; forgiveness.

We have a very savvy adversary. When he can keep us in fear of confessing sin to the One who already knows what we're going to say and can keep us from confessing something when he already knows what the answer is going to be back to us, that's a pretty savvy enemy. We also have to acknowledge that we have a pretty weak flesh too. That it's too easy for him to keep us from acknowledging our sin before our Lord. To acknowledge and confess our sin before Him literally just means to turn the light on in your life to shine upon the dark areas.

The second keyword is repentance. This is where Satan's pretty savvy here too, because he tries to convince us that repentance is feeling really, really, really, really bad about something. No, it's not. Repentance is an action, not a feeling. Repentance is not, 'I got caught, oops, I'm in trouble now.' Repentance is not, 'but I really am sorry this time.' That's maybe grief over your sin but it's not repentance. Repentance is turning away from. It is action that you've taken to no longer do whatever that particular thing is. To repent of that sin is to no longer do it.

In II Corinthians 7:8-9 Paul writes, [8] *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. [9] 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.* Paul had written a grievous letter to them where he felt bad at one point, but he doesn't now, because they were grieved into repenting. Repentance is not grief but Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret whereas worldly grief produces death. So we acknowledge and agree with God that something is sin, and then we repent, turn away from whatever that is. Paul calls us to put off those things that don't belong in our life.

Paul goes on to say in Colossians 3:12-14, [12] *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,* (not a comprehensive list) [13] *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. [14] And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

Paul has given us a list of things that we're to put off, and here's a list of things that we are to put on. You put off anything this earthly and you put on those things that belong to God. Now, as you look at the list of things that you are to put on, there's something we can't check all of our theology. Don't put your theology in the closet. What does God call you to put on that He does not give you in the Holy Spirit? It's a rhetorical question. Nothing. So what does He mean by put on? In Colossians 3:12 he says put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved. Why holy? I thought that's what this whole process was about – to make us holy. He is saying God has chosen us and placed His Holiness within us.

It's a bit of a paradigm shift, for us to put on compassion we don't go get worldly compassion and put spiritual verbiage around it. We simply walk in the power of the Holy Spirit to be compassionate because the fruit of the Spirit is compassion, kindness, gentleness, self-control and that's exhibited in our life. There are certainly some things we do to increase in those areas, like engage in the means of grace so if we say we want to put on kindness, then we would go to God's Word and we would find passages/truth about kindness, and we would seek to embrace that and ask the Holy Spirit to develop that in our life.

So, Paul tell us to put off these things that don't belong and put on these things that do belong but then I think there's a secret to this formula. Now I want to look at Ephesians 4 which will sound very familiar to Colossians 3. Ephesians 4:17-28 says [17] *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. [18] They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. [19] They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. [20] But that is not the way you learned Christ!— [21] assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, [22] to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, [23] and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

*[25] Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. [26] Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil. [28] Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.*

The two examples of put off and put on in this passage from Ephesians are in verse 25 and 28. Hypothetically let's say someone in our church was going around stealing things out of other people's cars and we caught them. What do we tell the person who's been stealing stuff out of the cars? This is not a trick question, you would say "Bruce tell them to quit stealing." He said he will. Okay, we're good. I mean, give the stuff back, but we're good. God doesn't stop there. Ephesians 4:28 is sanctification and sanctification is not simply about not doing something or doing something. Sanctification is about putting to death thievery. Let the thief steal no longer. Stealing is taking from someone something that is theirs. The opposite of that is not, don't steal. That's a great step, but it's not the opposite of that. The opposite of taking from someone something that's not there is giving to someone, something that is yours. The problem is that everything the thief has he stole from somebody. He doesn't have anything to give. He can't become a giver.

God says I didn't just save the thief so that he would no longer steal, I saved the thief so that he would become a giver. God makes everything new. So part of the secret of this formula for sanctification isn't just put off, it is to put off by putting on the redeeming quality that completely makes that go away or by putting on the opposite of whatever that thing is in that person's life. This is something that I've tried to embrace for many years because I had a mentor of mine hit me over the head with this passage on something that was very close to home to me.

My wife Sonya has a wonderful family. They're the nicest people you would ever want to meet. You can probably imagine that if you've ever met my wife, who is the nicest person I've ever met. In their family there's no contention. If there was going to be any contention, they're not possibly going to talk about it. So if you don't talk about it, it goes away. It really doesn't, especially when you bring Bruce (me) into the family but that's a whole other thing. So, Sonya grew up in that incredibly pleasant environment and household. Bruce, on the other hand, was born into the Stallings clan. I believe we're descendants of Vikings, and so at least we think we are. Being born into the Stallings family at birth, you're given a sword, okay? And you are allowed to use that sword, but you can fatally wound anybody, but you can sling it and fight all that you want to but every fight has to have an ending and then everything's okay. So we fight real hard and then we're fine, we can do that in a meal.

So, Bruce with his sword marries Sonya. We're going to have this wonderful, beautiful marriage together, and it doesn't take very long for me to figure out that I say things and do things that hurt her significantly and I have no idea what I've done. Clearly I've done wrong but I keep trying not to do it. I have tried the 12 step plan. Don't do it. Don't do it, Don't do it, Don't do it. You get the message. Don't hurt her. I even tried hurting other people intentionally so as not to hurt her with what I said and it wasn't working. I go to my mentor. He takes me to this passage in Ephesians. He said, "Bruce, in order for you to root this out of your life, you're going to need to become the most encouraging person in Sonya's life." I thought about it. I looked at him. I remember I was young and I'm very much a realist. I said, "That will never happen." He said, "Why would you say that would never happen?" I said, "Two reasons; one, I'm not the most encouraging person in anyone's life, much less Sonya's and two, she has some phenomenally encouraging people in her life, and I'll never pass them."

My mentor then said to me "Bruce, why do you not love Jesus enough?" "I thought, we're talking about Sonya?" "No, Bruce, your sin is against Jesus, not Sonya. You've been trying to fix this issue in your life because it hurt someone you loved. You've been sinning against your Savior. Colossians 3 isn't focused on the other people. Sin is against our Savior. Bruce, why do you not love Jesus enough?" "Of course, I love Jesus." "If you love Jesus enough, then you will put to death this in your life by adding to your life, by the power of the Holy Spirit, this act of being the most encouraging person in Sonya's life." So, for over 30 years, on a daily basis, I endeavor to be the most encouraging person in Sonya's life.

I love and can very much resonate with Pastor Reeder's illustration, when he said 'Some sins you confess, you repent, and the Lord microwaves them out of your life. Praise the Lord. Others are a part of your sanctification process. These sins are in a crockpot.' I fully believe that if I stop trying to do that, and think I'm encouraging enough that it will a violation against my Savior. I don't know what your issue is that you need to root out of your life but I can tell you how to begin. Think about what's the thing that you keep asking God to forgive you of? Is it a little white lie? Is it a failure with impurity? Is it gossip? Is it slander? What is it that is that thing that you end up saying 'I did it again. I wish I could quit doing that'? Begin with that and ask yourself a very practical question – what's the opposite of that? Then begin to focus on adding that to your life, which means you can't do both of those at the same time. Therefore, as I focus upon building these things into my life, then it will root out and deal with these other things. I wish I could tell you the list of things but the number of them is impossible. As I said before, some sins God microwaves out and are dealt with very quickly, while others take some churning and seem to be a lifelong journey until Christ comes back just because our flesh is that weak, and because we need to constantly be reminded and live that intentionally.

Then Paul gives us a perspective in Colossians 3:13 which says *[13] 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.* I love this perspective but why did he shift? Why did he say you must put to death what's in your life? In other words, I don't have to put to death what's in your life. You don't have to put to death what's in my life. You have to put to death what's in your life and your list would be different than mine. Bruce, you must add to your life these things and you have your own list of things that you're working on. Then all of a sudden, he says 'bear with one another.' Why would he do that? The reason is every single believer is a work in process. We're a holiness project in process. Every single one of us has things we need to put off, and every single one of us has things that we need to put on.

You have probably already put on some things that I need to put off. You we're probably way ahead of me in some areas, and I may have worked in an area that you've not yet worked in. Every believer is a work in progress to put off and to put on, as we mature and become more like Christ. But we're all at different levels and we're going to fail in our process of doing this, therefore you're going to need to bear with one another. There are going to be times when our works in progress are going to clash and we're going to butt heads with each other so we will need to bear with one another.

I think when he says and if one has a complaint against another, I think the if may be a little rhetorical. I think the if isn't like it could happen every century. I think it could happen every day is what he's saying. Maybe it's and when one has a complaint against each other, forgive each other. I love simple and direct communication, especially when it's from the Word of God. If one has a complaint against another it's not complicated. It's not hard to understand. It may be hard to do. The hard to do might be because of the something that's in us that's keeping us from doing it. If somebody has a complaint against another then forgive each other.

Then he adds a statement that becomes our motivation; as the Lord has forgiven you so you also must forgive. How did the Lord forgive you? Here's another way to ask this in which I will ask myself this. Bruce, have you ever held anybody to any condition of forgiveness that the Lord's never held to you? Yes. Have you ever said 'I can't forgive unless...' when Jesus never did that to you? Yes. Well, Bruce, that's sin. You need to confess and repent of that. The reason that you forgive has nothing to do with the sincerity, with the effectiveness or with the initiation of someone else asking you. It has everything to do with how much you've been forgiven. As soon as someone says 'Bruce, will you forgive me?' My mind should shift to Christ and say 'Absolutely. I've been forgiven of more than you could possibly imagine.' As I have been forgiven. I must forgive. I will forgive. He knows we do this in context.

So, Paul ends this part with Colossians 3:14 which says [14] *And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.* It seems you would have to know Paul was going to end in love. Paul is basically saying "You all are a bunch of messed up people. You're a mess but you're a work in progress. I'm working in every one of you, and you're making a little progress here and a little there and God is doing a work in each and every one of us until the Day of Christ Jesus, and He's going to keep on doing that work. We're confident He will carry that work out to completion. Praise the Lord. Until then, there's still going to be messes so bear with one another, forgive one another and love one another." Love one another with the love that He defines not just the 'I love you brother' which basically means I don't want to talk about it.

Love with the love that is patient and kind, a love that's not rude, that doesn't end verbose, is not arrogant, doesn't insist on its way, keeps no record of wrongs, bears all things, believes all things, hopes in all things, endures and never ends. That's what Paul is saying here. Love one another that binds everything together in perfect harmony. I love that last word, harmony. The seat up front I get to sit in on Sunday mornings when we have an orchestra, is a wonderful seat. When they warm up, they'll be playing their different parts and they don't sound good until they all play them together. Then it's beautiful harmony.

Paul is kind of using this word as an illustration saying, that you are all a different instrument and when you play well together there's perfect harmony. I want to add another element to the illustration. Let's say you came up to the front of our church where the orchestra plays and you saw that all the different instruments were broken, strings missing, broken in half, couldn't possibly be played. The power of God can make that sound like perfect harmony,

because that's what we are. We're not beautiful instruments that just need to be played. We're lumps of clay that can be shaped and molded into anything.

I want to wrap up this study by again saying this is like a lab passage which means there is something for you to do. I don't know what your application is, but God wants you to put something off. He wants you to put something to death. It could be a little thing or a huge thing and the Holy Spirit wants to work in your heart and mind to bring that to you today, to get you to think about whatever that thing is. I'm going to give you a moment to just ask the Holy Spirit what is that the Lord wants you to put off. Go ahead and ask the Holy Spirit what the first thing or the next thing the Lord wants you to do now? If you've been doing this, just ask Him what the next thing is. If you're starting doing this, just ask Him what the first thing is, because you'll repeat this until Jesus comes back.

What's the next one thing? Just one. What's the next one thing I need to work on? What do I need to put to death in my life? What have I been struggling with or wrestling with and need to put to death? What's the opposite of that thing? What do I need to focus on instead of just focus on not doing something so that I would go from being a thief to being a giver and watch God do something redeeming. Take a few moments, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal that to you. When He brings to your mind what it is, confess it and ask Him to lead you in repentance of it, and then to lead you to what that opposite thing is that you could focus on. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father God reveal through your Spirit that which we need to put to death in our life. Show us what to focus on so that You can receive glory in our life through the forgiveness and wisdom You will give. Thank You for this time in Your Word and the truth we can apply to our lives through Your Holy Spirit's leading. Help us to love one another better and bear with one another. Thank You for Your graciousness and patience with us, we ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.