



**“FASHION TIPS:
WHAT NOT TO WEAR”**

We all want to have a doctor who will give us an accurate and honest assessment as to what is wrong with our bodies. In our spiritual lives, we also need to have a Doctor tell us what is wrong with our hearts and minds. This week we will look at the sin that is prevalent in our lives. The choice of what to do with the diagnosis is up to us. We could ignore it or we can allow it to be a catalyst for change.

DAY 1

Today's Scripture:

Colossians 3:5-6; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:18-20;
1 John 3:4

The Word

I do not like scary movies. I was in a theater watching a cartoon movie with a group of friends when I was frightened by the events taking place on screen. I jumped in my seat and screamed. A little girl, who was seated behind me, laughed and said to her mom, "That lady over there screamed." I was mocked by a child! An eight year old was not bothered by the movie while I was visibly and audibly upset! My friends still consider it humorous to know that cartoons can and will scare me.

If a movie has the power to frighten at least some of us, real life can scare even more people. There are horrible evils in this world. The nightly news is enough to make anyone jump and scream as the terrible events of this world happen before our eyes. Murder. Rape. Genocide. Abuse. Drugs. Cults. Terrorism. We behold these terrible crimes and wonder, "How could anyone do such a thing?" But the truth is all of us are capable of evil.

Colossians 3:5-6

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

Verse 5-6: The crimes of the world are in you and in me. It is out of our hearts that the wickedness of all people comes forth.

Jeremiah 17:9

*⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?*

Verse 9: Your heart is deceitful and so I am mine. It pours forth with evil. Often, we overlook the heart to focus on outward actions. But it is the heart that needs to change.

Matthew 15:18-20

¹⁸But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

Verse 18-20: In Jesus' day, the religious leaders were strict with their ritual cleansings before eating. They believed that if you did not wash your hands in a certain way then you were spiritually "unclean". To be unclean precluded you from being a part of worship. Jesus rebuts this falsehood by focusing on the fact that washed hands do not make a person clean or unclean in God's sight. Instead, the Lord looks at the heart.

In modern times we easily see through the religious leaders' "washed hands" claim to spirituality. We consider it foolish. However, we need to look at our own "washed hands" ways of looking good on the outside while hiding evil in the heart. There are many people in prison today for heinous crimes that friends and neighbors would say, "He seemed so nice. I never thought he would do anything like that." They had "washed hands" but "dirty hearts".

For every person who believes his or her heart is clean because it has never committed an act that would lead to time in prison, meditate on these words:

1 John 3:4

⁴Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

Verse 4: Every sin that we commit is breaking the law of God. We are lawbreakers. No matter how good we look on the outside, we are criminals. It is easy to look at the people in prison and think, "I'm not as bad as she or he is." But we forget this truth: by God's law, we all deserve eternal prison time. Thankfully, Jesus did the time for us.

Our records have been cleared. We have been eternally pardoned. But we cannot forget our pasts. We cannot forget what it cost Jesus to free us from our prisons. We cannot begin to think we are "good people". For in truth, all of us are capable of evil. It is only by the Holy Spirit that we have been kept from being the lead story on the nightly news. It's time for us to face the truth about ourselves. For only by seeing who we truly are, wicked and depraved, will we see the need to remove the hint of sin in our lives. Sin is the most frightening thing in the universe.

Up Close and Personal

Confess any sin that you harbor in your heart. Ask God to make your heart clean.

In what ways do we focus on “clean hands” (outward religious acts) instead of “clean hearts” (true spirituality).

Write your thoughts and feelings about the truth from 1 John 3:4.

What is the danger in considering yourself a “good person”?

DAY 2

Today's Scripture:

Colossians 3:5-8; John 20:24-29; Romans 12:1-2

The Word

The wrath of God is coming. He will avenge the sin that humanity has committed against Him. He is the Judge who has the right and the power to condemn. For those of us who have been redeemed by the death of Jesus, we will be spared the judgment. This should not lead us to complacency. Instead, we must work to eradicate sin for it deserves punishment.

Colossians 3:5-8

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

Verse 5-8: Look at the imagery: we are to put to death anything that belongs to our earthly nature. We must rid ourselves of “anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language”. We are to be active in removing sin from our lives. Our activity should be such a frontal attack that the sin within us is “put to death”. This is not a “Well, I guess I’ll try” kind of an attitude. This is a battle to the death!

People who go to war are willing to die for their country. Their loyalty sometimes leads to the ultimate sacrifice. We, too, must have loyalty in order for us to engage in warfare. If we are loyal to our King, then we will fight against the sin nature that is within our flesh. If our loyalty is to ourselves, then we will take the easy way out and not bother to fight. We must decide to whom we will be loyal.

How do we become loyal to the King? We must recognize why He deserves our devotion. A disciple named Thomas gives us a good illustration of how this is done.

John 20:24-29

²⁴Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

²⁶A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Verse 24-29: Thomas realized that Jesus had died and had arisen from the dead. Thus, he proclaimed, "my Lord and my God!" We, too, know this truth. He spoke this truth before he received the Spirit yet he was able to declare his loyalty. How much more should we for we know the truth of the resurrection, we understand the purpose of His death (to atone for our sins), and we have been given the Holy Spirit? Because of all of this, we look forward to eternal life. We have many reasons to be loyal to our King!

This loyalty demands our allegiance. We need to join the fight. We must battle the sin in our lives. It is the only fitting response to all we have been given.

Romans 12:1-2

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Verse 1-2: Look at God's mercy. Look at all that Jesus has done for you. Meditate on all His works in your life. Now, what will be your response? Will you decide to exude energy on removing sin from your life? Will you decide to do whatever it takes to win the battle? Or will your heart look similar to the ones that the Lord will condemn to eternal judgment?

Up Close and Personal

Ponder all that Jesus has done for you. Spend time praising Him for His wonderful works.

What sin do you need to battle in your life? How will you put this sin to death?

How does loyalty to Jesus help us to overcome sin?

DAY
3

Today's Scripture:

Genesis 3:6-10; Colossians 3:9-11

The Word

Sin leads to hiding from God and others. It has been going on since sin entered the world.

Genesis 3:6-10

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

Verse 6-10: Adam and Eve were living in Paradise. They walked free from clothes without any shame. But then they sinned. Sin leads to shame, to pain, to covering and to hiding. They hid from themselves; they hid from one another; they hid from God.

The most tragic question in the Bible is when God asked His beloved creation, “Where are you?”

This same question is asked to each one of us. When we hide behind our sin, we lose our relationship with God. Our friendship is halted because of what we have done. Our relationships with others are also maligned. As long as we hide, we are alone, without God and without others. Sin is so destructive. The enemy works to keep us hidden. He feeds us lies to hide behind. In turn, we lie to ourselves, to others, and to God. We will do anything to “protect” our image. Little do we realize that all we are doing is sheltering ourselves away from the only lifeline we have to healing and restoration. We must come out of hiding.

Colossians 3:9-10

⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Verse 9-10: Transparency is vital for successfully living out the new life of Christ. We need to stop lying by telling others that we “have it all together”. Instead, we must be honest about our struggles with sin. This will help us to build the support we need for change. Our authenticity allows others to be brought into our lives who can fill us with knowledge for spiritual success. This knowledge is not “10 steps to a better you”. Instead, it is wisdom gained by the Spirit through the Word. We can share with one another how God has helped us in the past through our sin struggle and also encourage others towards that same success. Together, we can build one another up as we put on the new self. This new self is glorious, looking more and more like God Himself!

In a culture obsessed with image, how do we come out of hiding and openly share our struggles? We must realize the truth about one another.

Colossians 3:11

¹¹Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Verse 11: We are all on equal ground. No one is better or worse than you for each one of us is a sinner. The type of sin we have committed or are struggling with is not the issue. Do not compare sins. How can you compare mud to mud? It’s all a mess. We are in equal need of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Through Him, we can come out of hiding and share with one another the struggles we have. Through Him, we can listen and not judge others. Through Him, we can love one another to wholeness. Through Him, we can answer God’s question of “Where are you?” by standing with our brothers and sisters and saying, “Here we are!”

Up Close and Personal

If you have a Christian friend with whom you can share your struggles, spend time thanking God for this person and praying for that person today. If not, ask the Lord to send you someone with whom you can grow in Christ. Until then, continue to seek the Best Friend of your life, Jesus Christ our Lord. He will meet your needs.

In what ways do you hide when you have committed a sin?

How does hiding affect your relationships with God and others?

How will you begin to be transparent with others about your struggles?

How can you receive help from others in dealing with the sin in your life?

DAY
4

Today's Scripture:

Luke 7:36-39, 44-48, 50; Colossians 3:9-11

The Word

Have you ever been labeled? In Puritan times a person who committed the act of adultery would have to wear the letter "A" on their garments. The label enabled everyone to know the sin committed. We do not physically label ourselves today, but emotionally many of us carry labels with us: bad, useless, stupid, overweight, shy, manic, trouble...the list could go on and on.

The enemy wants to keep the label on us. He wants to beat us down. Often he uses other people to label us. Sometimes it is the "religious" people who scoff at our "badge of dishonor".

Luke 7:36-39

³⁶Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷When a woman who had lived a sinful life in

that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, ³⁸and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

³⁹When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

Verse 36-39: The Pharisee, a religious leader, only saw a sinner. He knew her past and considered her worthless. Have you ever been treated that way? Jesus knows how you feel. He was labeled as well. He was ridiculed for being a friend of sinners. (Matthew 11:19) This label was true. They belittled Him for caring for sinners like you and me. He sees past your label. He sees you as someone He loves.

Luke 7:44-48

⁴⁴Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

Verse 44-48: Your sins are forgiven. Your label is gone. You are no longer held to your past. You are a new creation.

Colossians 3:9-11

⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Verse 9-11: Read this verse in a modern translation.

Colossians 3:9-11

⁹⁻¹¹Don't lie to one another. You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it. All the old fashions are now obsolete. Words like Jewish and non-Jewish, religious and irreligious,

insider and outsider, uncivilized and uncouth, slave and free, mean nothing. From now on everyone is defined by Christ, everyone is included in Christ.

Verse 9-11: You wear only one label now. Your label is Christ. Everything from your past is obsolete. They are stripped off you and replaced with Christ alone. He is your all and all. It is time for you to believe by faith that you are a new creation. Live by your new label “Christian”. You are Christ’s own. But you must choose to believe that is true.

Luke 7:50

⁵⁰*Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*

Verse 50: This woman, whom the religious leader had labeled a “sinner”, had received forgiveness. She chose to take Jesus at His Word and to walk into a new life. At that moment she decided to leave her past, to leave her labels, and to walk towards a new life. She believed. Will you believe the same is true for you? No matter your past, no matter your poor decisions, no matter your circumstances; will you believe that He has made you a new creation? Then, today, you can walk in your new life. You can go in the way of peace.

Up Close and Personal

Ask God to help you identify any “labels” that you are wearing. Request His help in removing these labels so that you can leave your past behind and walk confidently in Christ.

Write any “labels” that you have carried or are carrying now.

How have you labeled others?

How are “labels” damaging to a person emotionally as well as spiritually?

How would a life without labels be connected to a life of peace?



Today's Scripture:

Colossians 3:5-11; Psalm 26

The Word

We have looked at ourselves this week. I hope you are ready for change in your life. I do not want this to be just another bit of knowledge to add to your Bible trivia. Instead, the Word of God is meant to enact Power into your life.

In closing this week, compare our passage in Colossians to Psalm 26.

Colossians 3:5-11

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

There must be change in our lives. We need to go from “Colossians to Psalms”. Our lives need to have the world removed and God exalted. Psalm 26 shows what a God-honoring life looks like. It gives us a picture of what we are striving towards.

Psalm 26:1-3

*1 Vindicate me, O LORD,
for I have led a blameless life;
I have trusted in the LORD
without wavering.*

*2 Test me, O LORD, and try me,
examine my heart and my mind;*

*3 for your love is ever before me,
and I walk continually in your truth.*

Verse 1-3: Anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language should be replaced with patience, trust, growth, and love. Instead of desiring revenge or lashing out at others or

gossiping about the offenders, Psalm 26 people will allow the Lord to vindicate them. They do not retaliate but give the guilty party over to God to judge. Instead of focusing on what the other people have done wrong, they ask the Lord to test, try and examine their hearts and minds so that they might grow. Because of the love and truth of God, they willingly abandon their old selves in order to walk in the new.

Psalm 26:4-5

*4 I do not sit with deceitful men,
nor do I consort with hypocrites;*

*5 I abhor the assembly of evildoers
and refuse to sit with the wicked.*

Verse 4-5: People of Psalm 26 no longer act like the world. Their associations are no longer worldly. They have given up habits and relationships which drag them back to the ways of the flesh. They understand that they have new relationships in Christ which will build them toward Christ instead of away from Him.

Psalm 26:6-7

*6 I wash my hands in innocence,
and go about your altar, O LORD,*

*7 proclaiming aloud your praise
and telling of all your wonderful deeds.*

Verse 6-7: People of Psalm 26 use their time and energy to live for the Lord not themselves. Their words and actions reflect the Father not the ways of the world which are sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed. Their righteous lives are evident for others to see.

Psalm 26:8

*8 I love the house where you live, O LORD,
the place where your glory dwells.*

Verse 8: People of Psalm 26 love the Lord and His people. For the Lord indwells His people. Believers are the “house of the Lord”. They rejoice in the fact that “there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free”. They promote this unity through love and service to the body of believers.

Psalm 26:9-11

*9 Do not take away my soul along with sinners,
my life with bloodthirsty men,*

*10 in whose hands are wicked schemes,
whose right hands are full of bribes.*

*11 But I lead a blameless life;
redeem me and be merciful to me.*

Verse 9-11: People of Psalm 26 do not want to associate with evil. They want to be separate unto Christ. Thus, they want to live in the new self which is “being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator”. The new self lives in such a way that it is protected from the consequences of sin in this life and also in the life to come.

Psalm 26:12

*12 My feet stand on level ground;
in the great assembly I will praise the LORD.*

Verse 12: People of Psalm 26 realize that they are weak and so are in need of a firm foundation. This foundation is Christ alone who “is all, and is in all”. They do not rest assured of their own good works but instead trust the redeeming work of Christ on the cross. The knowledge and awareness of all He has done for them causes them to want to continue to live each moment as people of Psalm 26.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Spirit to equip you to be a person of Psalm 26.

What part of your life still looks like the world?

How will you work to transform into a person of Psalm 26?