

Become a Christ-Centered Christian: Preaching from Colossians

THE POWER OF YOUR HIDDEN LIFE

The Hidden Power of Your Rejections; Col. 3:5-11

*****Michelangelo** (Picture of David sculpture) described the process of creating his magnificent sculptures as a matter of seeing the form within the marble and then removing everything that didn't belong.

"Every decision you make marks your soul," Erika Kirk said, quoting her husband, Charlie, at his memorial last week (September 21, 2025). She continued, "You must choose to mark your soul again and again in the direction of Christ. Pray again, read your Bible again, go to church next Sunday. And break free from the shackles and temptations of this world."

You want to live your life in a positive, hopeful, faith-filled way. The Bible tells us to think about the things that are lovely and of good report (Philippians 4:8). But you cannot avoid saying no sometimes. In fact, it is very important that you say no. The capacity to say no, to reject some attitudes, relationships, behaviors, and speech, is one of the signs of emotional health. An inability to reject things is evidence of a life without direction. God rejects some things. The Ten Commandments are cast in a negative mode: "Thou shalt not..." If you are to be like God, you must learn to reject what God rejects.

Great POWER resides in your rejections. They describe you and define you. The Apostle Paul goes into more detail here about the OLD YOU, before Christ, and the NEW YOU in Christ. "You died with Christ," he wrote, and "You are raised with Christ." Here is further instruction for being the person God calls you to be.

*****Sitting in a conference room in Philadelphia listening to Fred Luter preach. And suddenly, I hear him call my name. I am startled: "I know you have experienced this, David, and so have I."**

I learned later that Fred does this in every sermon. I also learned that he has blanks in his notes where he writes in the names of people he expects to be in the room.

Your name is somewhere in this text. I want you to find your name, the place where the Holy Spirit is speaking directly to you about your behavior, speech, or relationships.

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. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Intro: You unleash tremendous moral and spiritual power in your life through what you reject. When a temptation is conquered and defeated, you experience the power of the Spirit in your life. You strengthen the moral fiber of your being. And you demonstrate to yourself and others the truth of God's word.

The things that you reject do not usually decorate your home or office. You don't display them, generally, so they may seem insignificant to you and to others. However, your rejections have a great power. In fact, they may be as powerful as the things you accept. **Your rejections serve to channel the time and energies of your life in new directions.** Your rejections reinforce the values that guide decision-making and goal-setting.

God is removing things in your life so you will become more like Christ and more like the person you truly want to be.

I. SAYING NO HAS THE POWER TO KEEP YOU CLEAN

***You probably take care to get rid of the dirt that inevitably collects on you as you work or play. You throw your dirty clothes in the washing machine.

***Have you heard the saying, "cleanliness is next to godliness"? People used that phrase to encourage their loved ones to wash their hands, wash their face, take a bath. I heard it first, I think, from my mother. The word "impurity" here is translated "uncleanness" in the KJV, ἀκαθαρσία

A. Mark 7 is an extended teaching by Jesus concerning what is clean and unclean. The Pharisees are upset because Jesus' disciples are eating food without washing their hands. Jesus delivers a severe rebuke to these hypocrites:

"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men... You reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your own tradition (Mk. 7:8)

Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them" (Mark 7:14-15).

Jesus gave us a list of the things that come out of a man and make him spiritually unclean. He said,

From within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean' (Mark 7:21-23).

I don't know that Jesus was naming the besetting sins of people, but I do consider this list very important for knowing what I should reject if I am to follow Jesus.

B. The list of the Apostle Paul in verse 5 has much in common with the list of Jesus. In fact, Paul will make another list in a couple of verses that will include even more from the list of Jesus.

C. The Ten Commandments stand in the background of these lists. The list of Jesus, in fact, includes all of the second table of the Ten Commandments: murder, adultery, stealing, lying, and coveting (Exodus 20:13-17). These are the commandments that focus on human-to-human behavior. The first table focuses on human-to-God behavior: no other gods, no graven images, God's sacred name, God's Sabbath, and honoring parents (Exodus 20:3-12).

II. SAYING NO HAS THE POWER TO KEEP YOU TRUE to your NEW NATURE

A. They keep you true to your new nature.

The wrath of God comes down on these things, and you are no longer "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). You are now the children of God's favor, not of his wrath. The things you reject keep you true to your new nature in Christ.

When you participate in sexual immorality (πορνεία) as a child of God, you have not only violated the law of God, but you have become a hypocrite. You are acting in a way that is inconsistent with your nature. Your deeds are going against your words. You are playing a part that you no longer belong in. Sexual immorality figures prominently in all the lists of sins. I think this is true because our sexuality is so much a part of who we are—being male or female is essential to our nature.

In Christ, we understand that

WE ARE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, male and female created he them

(Genesis 1:27). We must now understand our sexuality from the perspective of Christ Jesus, our Lord. And we know that our sexuality is FROM ABOVE, NOT FROM BELOW.

It is to be understood as part of the image of God, as Genesis 1:27 implies, not part of our lower nature.

B. They keep you true to your new walk. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived (verse 7). You have a new way to behave.

1. **This is how we know we are in him: whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did** (1 John 2:5b-6). Your new walk is the walk of Christ. You are a disciple of the Lord Jesus. You can no more participate in the deeds and works of darkness than could Peter or John or Andrew.
2. We must walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.
3. We walk differently in regard to POSSESSIONS. **We must now avoid theft, greed, and coveting.**

C. They keep you true to your new life.

1. You had an old life. Perhaps you inherited that life from your forefathers. Peter described it as an **"empty life handed down to you from your ancestors"** (1 Peter 1:18).
2. That was **"the life you once lived."** You don't live that way anymore. Any going back is a betrayal of the new life you have in Christ. Your rejections keep you true to that life.

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3. Some of you are experiencing the rejection of old friends that you used to hang out with. They don't want to be around you now that you are rejecting some of the behaviors. Listen, their rejections are good things, not bad. Their rejections will help you keep true to the new life you have in Christ.

4. Some of you are getting lots of invitations to come back into the world that you left behind to follow Jesus. You must reject those invitations. You have to say no.

III. SAYING NO HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE YOUR SPEECH:

Do not lie to each other (verse 9).

A. Your Words are an issue with God.

They must come under the Lordship of Christ.

B. Angry Words have got to go.

This includes the retort of quick temper, the uncontrolled words when you are surprised The malicious words that intend to hurt others.

C. Dishonest words have got to go.

The slanderous words that intend to damage reputations.

D. Filthy language has got to go.

You cannot be the same profane, vulgar, potty mouth you used to be when you come to Christ.

***My father's deliverance from filthy language when he was converted.

E. He fully intends to redeem your words.

F. He fully intends to REPLACE your profanity and vulgarity with healthy, wholesome, encouraging conversation that is consistent with the character of God.

***I was trying to help an older man with his marriage when I was a young pastor. I received a call from a mysterious stranger who told me that I did not have all the facts and that she needed to speak to me. I learned that this man I was speaking to had been having an affair for seven years.

IV. SAYING NO HAS THE POWER TO KEEP YOU GROWING

A. So many believers are discouraged because they have not become the people that they wanted to be and hoped to be when they came to Christ. They have fallen back instead of going forward.

It is because they have not been rejecting in their lives the things that God hates.

B. YOU HAVE TAKEN OFF YOUR OLD SELF, Paul declares in 3:9, WITH ITS PRACTICES.

C. YOU HAVE PUT ON THE NEW SELF, WHICH IS BEING RENEWED IN KNOWLEDGE IN THE IMAGE OF ITS CREATOR (verse 10).

D. Your rejections keep intact the lifeline of God's resources for you. They keep you growing as God and his word keep working their way through you.

CONCLUSION: It doesn't matter who you are—this teaching is good for you. Verse 11 says that whether you are Gentile or Jew, Hatfield or McCoy, you can be renewed in your heart and life. You can be reshaped into the image of your Creator.

*****Combat fishing: cutting the line**

DAILY JOURNAL PROMPTS

September 28- What is one thing I've held onto that God is calling me to release?

September 29- Are my words reflecting Christ today?

September 30- Where do I struggle with honesty—with others, with God, or myself?

October 1- What is one old habit or mindset I need to leave behind?

October 2- How have I seen God grow me this year? What still needs to change?

October 3- What does living in my "new self" look like today?

October 4- Am I seeing others the way Christ sees them?