

GROW

AN SMBS SERIES

Lesson 12 – The Right Process: Put On

Teacher Edition



Review: So far we have seen that in order to change, you have to want to change and you have to be given a new nature so that you can change. Next we saw that in order to change, you need God’s help, although God still requires you to put forth effort as well. Then we got a broad overview of God’s masterplan for change: put off, be renewed, put on, and examined what it means to put off sin and what it means to be renewed. We saw that in order to renewed, we must have God’s grace, and that requires humility. That grace then comes through three channels that Scripture clearly gives us: Bible meditation, prayer, and fellowship.

Overview: This lesson will cover the final means of grace: fellowship with other believers.

Teacher’s Note: This lesson covers a large portion of Scripture: 2 ½ chapters! For this reason, the teaching of chapter 7 is summarized for time’s sake. If in your preparation you feel it necessary to summarize other portions as well, please feel free to do so. Familiarize yourself with the teaching enough that you can give an overview of what the verses are saying, or read several key verses that carry the thought. If you have your table read (and I highly encourage you do!), have them read small chunks at a time, rather than everyone reading the next verse, as that typically will take longer.

Introduction: We’ve come a long way in our series. We’ve examined God’s part in sanctification, seen our need of salvation, and looked at the first two steps in change: putting off and being renewed. We now come to the final step of biblical change, the step where the rubber

meets the road: putting on. This is the stage where the believer seeks to put into practice the changes he knows he needs to make. Everything that has been said before is important, but means nothing if not followed through by an actual life change.

In Romans 6-8, we have one of the longest explanations of how spiritual growth works. We see in this passage three different metaphors of what our state is in Christ, and how that state should be practically lived out. Each picture states a reality that we have in Christ, and follows it up with a command to live out that reality practically. There is a healthy balance of indicatives (what is true) and imperatives (what we must do), with the imperatives flowing out from the indicatives (what we do is because of what we know to be true).

I. You are dead to sin and alive to God (6:1-14).

What word appears in verses 3, 6, and 9? (know) Summarize what this passage is teaching that we know (We are dead to sin).

A. You must know that you are dead to sin (1-10).

Many Christians misunderstand this passage. They mistakenly think it is telling them that they must die to their sin, but the passage is saying the opposite: you are dead to sin! Your death to sin is a past reality, not a present command!

At what point, according to this passage, do believers “die to sin”?

Why do most believers struggle to understand what this passage teaches?

How can a believer be dead to sin when he struggles to truly change?

B. You must believe that you are dead to sin (11).

For ten verses Paul argues that believers are dead to sin. Then in verse 11 he calls upon Christians to “consider” or “reckon” this to be the case. The word used here is a mathematical term

that has the idea of calculating something. It is used in 1 Corinthians 13:5 to describe “counting” wrongs. It is used in Romans 4:4 where Paul says “Now to the one who works, his wages are not **counted** as a gift but as his due.” It can mean that to mean “as a result of a calculation **evaluate, estimate, look upon as, consider.**”¹ In other words, it means to do the math and come to a settled conclusion. And the conclusion God wants you to come to is that sin no longer has power over you. Based on what you know, you must then conclude/believe the truth of God’s Word, even when you don’t feel that way!

(Illustration) Suppose you have a nasty landlord. You’re payments are due the 3rd of the month and if it’s the 4th and he hasn’t gotten paid, he shows up at your doorstep and demands his money, screaming at you. He threatens to take you to court, and since he owns the land, he can. You struggle to make ends meet and can’t always pay right away, so you live in terror of your “master.” You dread his visits but can’t do anything about them, since he does have a legal right to demand his payment. Then one day he falls behind on his payments, and the bank repossesses your house. They sell it to another landowner, who’s gentle, kind, and understanding. Then, on the 4th of the month, you hear a knock at the door. You open it up, and there is your old landlord. He begins screaming at you for not paying him, and threatens to take you to court if you don’t pay up now. You may be intimidated. You may be afraid that he will take you to court, even if you know in your mind he can’t. And you may pay him. But you don’t have to! He has no right over you!

Similarly, you don’t have to sin. Sin used to be your master and boss, and you had no choice but to sin. But that’s not the case anymore. Sin’s power has died, and now you have a different master, whether it feels that way or not. So you must believe

¹ *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings* (BDAG).

that sin's power has been cancelled, and the way you do that is...

C. You must live dead to sin (12-14).

True belief will result in action. Verse 12 includes that all important word "therefore." Because you are dead to sin, do not allow your members (body parts) to be used for sinful purposes. You have a choice, to present yourself to sin or to present yourself to God.

Paul warns against letting sin "reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions." Are the passions of our body inherently bad? If not, what is this passage warning against?

Paul builds on this analogy of presenting yourself to someone in the next section by talking about slavery and freedom.

II. You are free from sin and a slave of righteousness (6:15-23).

A. The Reality of Slavery

You will always be a slave of someone. No matter what you do, you will end up either serving God or serving sin. Four times in three verses Paul talks about obedience, either to sin or to God. In a culture where we don't want anyone to tell us what to do, God's Word reminds us that we are all obeying someone or something. Either we are obeying the passions of sin (v 12) or the Word of God, but there is no middle ground.

There is an important principle to be learned here. Freedom isn't about not having a master. It's about having the right master. Christ teaches this principle on a couple of occasions as well (Matthew 6:24; Luke 17:7-10). In the Luke passage, Christ has just told his disciples they were required to forgive sins unconditionally. Their response? "Increase our faith!" Christ responded by telling them that if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they could move mountains. In other words, faith wasn't the issue. He then goes on to tell a parable that makes the point that they don't need more faith, they just need to

obey! Why? Because they are servants and Christ is their master.

How does thinking of God as our Master help us in our sanctification?

How has the thinking of autonomy (self-rule) infiltrated the church, and how has that damaged believers?

B. The Result of Slavery

1. Slavery to sin results in rebellion.

Sin is an umbrella term for all kinds of wrong actions. Paul uses three synonyms for sin throughout this section of his letter to help us better understand what sin truly looks like, and why none of us would want to be enslaved to it.

Unrighteousness (v 13) – describes conduct that unjust or unfair. The word describes conduct that takes advantage of others and fails to line up with God’s code.

Impurity (v 19) – describes filthy conduct or behavior. Sin is inherently degrading and gross. Sadly, those involved in sin fail to see this, and end up like the dog in Proverbs 26:11 that returns to its vomit over and over again.

Lawlessness (v 19) – describes conduct that breaks the clear laws of God. Paul notes that this begins a cycle of greater and greater lawbreaking.

2. Slavery to God results in righteousness.

In stark contrast to being a slave to unrighteousness, Paul goes on to argue that as believers, we are slaves to righteousness and ought to live that way! The gospel has freed us from the power of sin and given us the ability to live as slaves of righteousness! (v 17-18). This is seen practically in the way we use our body parts (members), yielding them either to sin or to God.

This is as a result of a heart change on the part of the Christian (cf Ezekiel 36:26-27; Jeremiah 31:33-34).

What would you say to someone who claims to be a believer but doesn't want to obey God? Have you ever been in a position where you know what God wanted but didn't want to do it?

C. The Reward of Slavery

1. Slavery to sin is rewarded with death.

Death is a major theme in chapter 6. "Die" or "death" appears 14 times in these 23 verses. Christ has died, and in his death he conquered sin. We died with Christ, and when we did, sin lost its power over us. But if we ignore what Christ has done, the penalty for sin is death. Death is inescapable! All throughout Scripture, God is clear that the payment for sin is death (Genesis 2:16-17; Ezekiel 18:4, James 1:15; Revelation 20:13-15). Immediately, death looks like separation from God and a lack of spiritual life and vitality. Ultimately, death is separation from God forever in hell. Those who choose to serve sin are choosing death.

2. Slavery to God is rewarded with eternal life.

In contrast, those who choose to serve God rather than sin will find eternal life. In Scripture, the gift of life means both quality of life (John 10:10) and quantity of life (***everlasting*** life). God gives a taste of what we will have now in restored fellowship, joy, and peace, but will open the floodgates when we die and are given resurrection bodies.

Transition: *In chapter 7, Paul argues that the believer is no longer under the law, that is, they are no longer must obey the Mosaic law to be right with God. The reason is that the law was unable to produce life, not because there was a problem with the law, but because people in their sinful flesh couldn't keep the law. The law was good, but man wasn't, and he was therefore unable to keep the law. Paul went so far as to say*

that in his flesh there was no good thing, and that sin dwelt within him. The law did have the positive effect of pointing out man's sin. Because man couldn't keep the law, he knew he was a sinner and needed someone to fix what was fundamentally wrong with him. God did this by sending Jesus to break the power of sin and giving the Spirit to empower new life in Christ, which leads us to our final point. . .

III. You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit (8:1-13).

The chapter break between chapters 7 and 8 is unfortunate, because Paul is continuing his discussion at the end of chapter 7 in the beginning of chapter 8. He concludes his discussion on the flesh, the law, and sin by stating that he saw a law in his body: when he wanted to do right, sin wouldn't let him (7:23). He picks up chapter 8 by stating that he had found freedom from the law of sin through another law, the law of the Spirit (8:2). This law accomplished what the law couldn't do, break the power of sin (8:3).

A. We must live in the Spirit, not the flesh, if we are saved (vv 1-8).

Paul echoes much of the language of Galatians here (Galatians 5:16-24). Here, as there, he sets up two opposing forces at war within us, the flesh and the Spirit. In Galatians, Paul talks about walking in the Spirit, here he describes the same concept but describes it as living according to the flesh by "setting the mind" on the flesh versus living according the Spirit by "setting the mind" on the Spirit.

This language parallels closely the discussion of Colossians 3:1-2. For believers, walking in the Spirit means controlling our thinking, meditating on Christ and His Word, rather than seeking to please ourselves.

In what ways can believers practically "set their minds on the things of the Spirit"?

B. We are in the Spirit, not the flesh if we are saved (vv 9-11).

Lest we become overly discouraged, Paul reminds believers that while in one sense we must seek to walk in the Spirit and live in the Spirit, in another sense we already are in the Spirit!

(Illustration) The phrase “You’re a [fill in the blank], so start acting like one!” is a common phrase. You could fill in that blank with someone’s last name “You’re a Hicks, start acting like one!” a profession, “You’re a soldier, start acting like one!” or even adulthood “You’re an adult, start acting like one!” We recognize that what we do must line up with what we are. Our identity should govern our behavior. Scripture uses this motif repeatedly: “You’re a saint, so act like one!” The recognition of who we are should motivate us, and the realization of what we must do should mobilize us.

C. We must seek to kill sin, by the help of the Spirit, if we are saved (vv 12-13).

Paul began this discussion in Romans 6 by telling us that we are dead to sin, now he tells us to kill sin! In Colossians 3 he does the same thing, telling believers that they have died (3:3) so they must put to death (3:5).

Why do you think Paul uses the image of mortification (killing, putting to death) when describing sin? How should his use of this term shape the way we think about the sin in our life?

What sins specifically does Paul say we need to kill in Colossians 3?

Paul essentially puts before us the same offer that Moses gave the children of Israel after he gave them the law:

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the

LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” Deuteronomy 30:9-10

But Paul gives us something Moses didn't, the help of God himself (**by the Spirit**)! With God's help, we must seek to actively, daily, practically be killing sin in our life by any means possible.

What are some ways believers can seek to kill sin?

Conclusion: All 3 of these points relate a spiritual truth: you are dead to sin and alive to God, you are God's slave not sin's slave, and you are in the Spirit not the flesh. ***Since these things are already true***, believe it and live like it!

What would you say to a believer who is struggling to believe whether or not these things are true?