

Main Idea: If we’re going to have maximum joy in our families, we need to learn how to *fight right* God’s way in our homes. That’s the message of Colossians 3:5-11. Specifically, we need to fight to get rid of three types of sin, and in so doing, we’ll experience the kind of communication God intends.

- I. Fight to get rid of moral sins (5-7).
 - A. Here's how (5).
 1. We may need to change what we call entertainment.
 2. We may need to practice radical amputation.
 - B. Here's why (6-7).
 1. Such sin brings the wrath of God (6).
 2. Such sin is what used to characterize us (7).
 - II. Fight to get rid of interpersonal sins (8).
 - A. The problem begins in the heart.
 1. Anger is a big problem in Christian homes.
 2. It's not good when children grow up thinking the world revolves around them.
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 - A. We must not lie to each other (9a).
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- Putting It Into Practice: Two questions to ask ourselves before we speak...
1. Would Christ say that?
 2. Would Christ say it that way?

If we’re going to maximize the joy in our families, we need to learn how to *fight right* in our homes. Sound strange? It’s true. We can’t be passive if we want to do family God’s way. Our joy depends on it, so does God’s glory, and the gospel makes it possible. That’s the essence of today’s message in Colossians 3:5-11.

Why do I say that? Listen to the language in the first verse of today’s text. “*Put to death,*” says Paul in Colossians 3:5. Those are fighting words, and this is a family text. Just a few verses later, Paul will address wives, husbands, children, and fathers directly (beginning in verse 18). But first, he makes it clear that we’re supposed to be killing some things in our homes. Let’s find out what, and why, and how.

Scripture Reading: Colossians 3:5-11

In Colossians 3, we are learning in practical terms how to *put Christ on display in our homes*. We are also learning how to *maximize the experience of joy in our family*. The two subjects go together. Putting Christ on display is the key to maximum joy.

The instruction begins by addressing our priorities. As we saw last time in verses 1-4, if the world is going to see Christ in our families, we need to “seek and think about [that is, *prioritize*] above things rather than earthly things.” Our joy and His glory depend on it.

To help us assess how we’re doing, we considered a priority grid last time. This is what seeking the above things looks like. First and foremost, we are to seek to be God’s kind of *person*. Nothing is more important than that, in any decision.

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the message preached at WBC in 2012.

The rest of the grid flows out of the first. We are to seek to be God's kind of partner, parent, parishioner, provider, and player. If the world is going to see Christ in us, we need to live in light of these gospel-shaped priorities.

Then, with these priorities in place, we move to a second area addressed in verses 5-11. If we are going to put Christ on display in this world, we need to *communicate in ways that honor Him*. Or put negatively, we need to eliminate the kind of communication that does not reflect well of Him.

This is where the fighting comes in. Communicating God's way isn't natural for sinners, even if we are redeemed sinners. We have patterns in place that need to change.

In the NIV, there are three imperatives in verses 5-11. In verse 5, "Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature." In verse 8, "Rid yourselves of all such things as these." And in verse 9, "Do not lie to each other." Each imperative pinpoints something that *must go*.

There are the three points in this message. According to Colossians 3:5-11, we need to fight to get rid of three types of sin, and in so doing, we'll create an atmosphere for the kind of communication God intends.

I. We must fight to get rid of moral sins (5-7).

"Put to death, therefore." Remember the context. How we *live* is determined by where we *sit*. Christ is seated at the right hand of God in heaven (1). If we've come to know Christ, and the first readers of this epistle had, we've died, and our life is now hidden with Christ in God (3). Positionally, we are seated with Him in heaven (Eph. 2:6).

But position leads to practice. So after spending the first two chapters of Colossians addressing the subject of our position in Christ, Paul now moves to lifestyle implications.

Morality must have a foundation, and God has provided that foundation. *He* is the foundation. He is the Creator of the universe, which means this is His world. And He has revealed His purposes for His world in a Book, His authoritative Word, which is to be our standard of morality.

But the first man and woman turned away from God and His Book, and went their own way. And so has every descendant of theirs since.

It's impossible for sinners to keep God's standard in their own strength. You can't impose morality from the outside. It doesn't work and doesn't last.

Thankfully, in His grace, God has provided the perfect solution. He sent His Son into the world, Jesus the Christ, who paid the penalty for our failure to keep God's standard, and who now energizes all who believe in Him so they can live according to the standard.

Friends, the audience Paul has in mind in this passage are people who are *in Christ*. If you're not in Christ, you won't be able to apply the truths we're about to learn. If you are in Christ, you can and must. A change in position must lead to a change in practice.

And where do we begin. If we're in Christ, we must fight to get rid of *moral sins*.

A. Here's how (5). "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." We're commanded to "mortify" (*nekrosate*) some things. The verb means "to render as dead, to regard as impotent." In Romans 6:11 Paul uses the same word, "Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin (KJV)."

If we are a believer, we cannot eliminate the influence of the flesh. But we can treat it as a morally impotent force in our lives. And we must. As Matthew Henry said, “It is necessary to mortify sins, because if we do not kill them, they will kill us.”²

What specifically are we to put to death? The NIV says “whatever belongs to your earthly nature.” The KJV offers the more literal rendering, “your members which are upon the earth.” What are “earthly members?” In verse 2 we were commanded to think about the “above” things, not the “earthly” things. Earthly things are the opposite of “above” things, the things that please the Lord.

Paul mentions five “earthly members” that we need to kill. He’ll give a second list of five sins in verse 8. But notice that the first five all have to do with sexual sin (either directly or indirectly). They are all perversions of something that God intended for His glory and the good of His creation.

Sexual sin is at its core a worship sin. Instead of worshipping the Creator, we are choosing to worship a creature. It could be a real person (as in an adulterous relationship), or an image on a screen (as in pornography), or even a fantasy in our minds. Indeed, the five items Paul lists here pertain to heart issues as much as the actions the heart produces.

If we engage in any of these five vices, we are not seeking the above things. We are to put them to death. Starting with “sexual immorality”. The Greek word is *porneian*. It's a general word that depicts any sexual sin, based on two Greek verbs which convey the idea of selling bodies for lustful purposes. It includes pre-marital sex and extra-marital sex.

The charge to put to death sexual immorality is a call to kill every trace of illicit sexual thought or behavior in our lives. It's not because God is harsh in His restriction, but because He is loving and knows that sex will only be meaningful and joyful when it's experienced between a loving husband and wife.

Next, we are to put to death “impurity” (uncleanness, KJV). This refers to moral impurity in all forms. Robert Gromacki explains, “It is marked by a filthy mind, full of sensually suggestive thoughts and humor. It reads illicit sex even into the most wholesome situations. Marked by perverted fantasies, it is expressed today through pornographic literature and movies. Caused by the lusts of the heart, it leads to the dishonor of bodies.”³

Kill impurity, says Paul. Or it will kill you.

Thirdly, “passion” must go (‘lust’ in the NIV; ‘inordinate affection’ in KJV). The Greek word is *pathos* which depicts erotic love and depraved passion. It encompasses both illicit heterosexual and homosexual activity.

Interesting word, passion. It's sort of feelings on steroids. In our day passion is seen as a virtue. Be passionate about your job, your team, your coffee, and certainly your sexual instincts. Give in to your drive, feed it, express it, don't hold back. So we're told.

Listen to this helpful explanation in a commentary by R. R. Melick, “A passion is uncontrolled and habitual lust. When lust goes unchecked, a passion for what is forbidden arises. Habits are formed which feed each other. Lust encourages passion, and passion produces more perverted lust.”⁴

² Henry, M., & Scott, T. (1997). [*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*](#) (Col 3:5). Logos Research Systems.

³ Gromacki, p. 132.

⁴ Melick, R. R. (1991). [*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*](#) (Vol. 32, p. 290). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Related to this, fourthly, is “evil desire” (the KJV calls it ‘evil concupiscence’). It too must be given the death blow. Sex is actually a good gift from the Creator, which He intends husbands and wives to enjoy in the bond of a marriage covenant. But sinners pervert God’s good gifts, and turn good desires into *evil desires*.

Lastly, we must mortify “covetousness” (NIV “greed”), a word that simply means “to have more.” This is the tenth commandment, “You shall not covet.” Not your neighbor’s house, nor his wife, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Pornography exists because the human heart covets. I must have that person, that body, that experience. Coveting is a hidden sin, and if left unchecked will explode in action.

Paul says that covetousness (or greed) *is* idolatry. How so? Answer this. What is idolatry? It’s worshipping an image rather than the One who created the image, right? An idolater isn’t satisfied with God. He wants something *more*, and so he worships the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).

Listen to Romans 1:24–25, “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!”

Beloved, here’s where the fighting must begin in our families. We who belong to Christ need to go to war and rid ourselves of every trace of moral sin. We must track it down and put it to death.

You say, “Agreed. I want to do that. But?” Here are two practical suggestions.

1. *We may need to change what we call entertainment.* To put it bluntly, we don’t kill *pornei* by watching television programs that glorify it in living. Nor are we mortifying “impurity” when we rent movies that celebrate what God forbids. Nor am I putting to death “passion” when I read magazines and novels that feed it.

Am I overreacting? Consider this. Several years ago the magazine *Christianity Today* surveyed a thousand of its subscribers: 23 percent said they had had extramarital intercourse (that’s one out of four), and 45 percent indicated they had done something they themselves deemed sexually inappropriate (that’s nearly one in two). What’s even more shocking is to realize that *Christianity Today* readers tend to be church leaders, elders, deacons, Sunday School superintendents, and teachers.⁵

Friends, sexual sin doesn’t just happen. If you’re entangled in its web, there’s hope for you. But you must submit your life wholeheartedly to the authority of God and His Word, and by His power choose today to kill sexual sin, not rationalize it. And that may mean a change in what you’ve been calling entertainment.

2. *We may need to practice radical amputation.* In the context of addressing the sin of lust, Jesus said (Matt. 5:29), “If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.” Jesus isn’t telling us to maim ourselves, but to take drastic action to eliminate whatever contributes to sin in our lives. To practice *radical amputation*. As someone has said, “It’s better to limp to heaven than to run to hell.”

You say, “I thought Christ made us new. Doesn’t the problem of sexual sin leave the moment a person becomes a Christian?” Yes, we are a new creation in Christ, but no, the problem doesn’t vanish. Keep in mind that Paul is talking here to Christians in this call to get rid of all inclinations to sexual immorality.

⁵Taken from Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, p. 22.

Beloved, there should be no trace of sexual sin in us, not in the jokes we tell, not in the entertainment we choose, not in the way we relate to the opposite sex. Not a trace.

You say, "But society says that what I do with my body is my own business, nobody else's. Is this really that big a deal?" Yes, and here's why.

B. Here's why (6-7). Paul gives us two reasons.

1. *Such sin brings the wrath of God (6).* "On account of these the wrath of God is coming." I can just hear some talk-show host saying, "Ah, come on! This is the twenty-first century. You're not going to insist we base our entertainment standards on the counsel of some prudish bachelor that lived twenty centuries ago, are you?"

The truth is, Paul didn't create this standard. The One who created sex (and everything else) is speaking to us. This is God's Word. And what does our God say is the consequence for violating His standard? His *wrath*.

Melick observes, "It [wrath] is not primarily an emotion, though emotional elements surface since all of God's being is set in motion in the expression of each attribute. Primarily, his wrath is the active reaction of his nature against all that is contrary to his nature. It is a recoiling of God's entire being. It has logical and volitional elements and primarily expresses God's judgment on people."⁶

The present tense verb in verse 6 indicates that God's judgment for sexual sin is not only a future event, but a present reality. It "cometh" says the KJV. It "is coming" says the NIV. In Romans 1 we're told that the wrath of God is being revealed right now against godlessness (1:18).

As Herbert Carson observes, "God does not stand as a spectator viewing the consequences which man's sin brings upon him; but rather intervenes in a judgment which may manifest itself in leaving men to wallow in the filth of their own lusts, so that they are worthy objects of the final condemnation."⁷

There's a second reason for getting rid of moral sin.

2. *Such sin is what used to characterize us (7).* "In these you too once walked, when you were living in them." There's incredible hope in those words, *you too once walked*, because it implies, you don't any more! And why not? Jesus Christ has entered your life, and He has set you free!

Beloved, we were under the wrath of God, and deservedly so. But Jesus Christ chose to go to the cross and take the wrath we deserved. He became our substitute. And because He did, instead of wrath we have received mercy. God forgave us. Christ liberated us so we can live a new, pure, holy life.

And this is why we can and must get rid of moral sin. It was this sin that *used to* characterize us, and for which Jesus gave His life.

Perhaps you're thinking, "But I've never done the things listed in verse 5." Really? You never lusted? You never coveted your neighbor's car? You never took a second look at a suggestive commercial? Let's not deceive ourselves. Maybe because of God's protecting grace, our heart sin never broke surface and became a lifestyle sin, but it was still sin, and it brought the wrath of God upon us.

There's something very beautiful, very hope-giving in those words, "You *used to walk* in these ways." They remind us that no one is beyond the reach of grace. No one.

And the grace that saved us from sin's penalty is now ours for salvation from sin's power. And this is a process, as we'll see even more clearly as we come to verse 8.

⁶ Melick, R. R. (1991). *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Vol. 32, p. 292). Broadman & Holman.

⁷ Herbert Carson, p. 82.

You may be thinking, “I thought this message was going to be about communication. What does sexual sin have to do with communication?”

I’ve counseled many men who’ve struggled with pornography. Any guess as to how their communication was with their wives? There’s our answer. What we’re hearing right now has everything to do with creating an atmosphere for good communication in our homes. If we want good family communication, then we must fight to get rid of some things, for if they’re there, we can be sure there won’t be joyful communication.

First, we must fight to get rid of moral sins.

II. We must fight to get rid of interpersonal sins (8).

Verse 8 begins, “But now.” People who have been rescued by grace and spared the wrath of God need to do something *now*. What is it? A second imperative. “But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.”

Paul lists five more vices that must go, and they have to do with interpersonal sins. G. Campbell Morgan calls them “the sins in good standing,” sins we can easily excuse.

“What do you mean I have a problem with anger?! You’re just too sensitive!” Please notice something about Paul’s two lists. In verse 5 he calls us to forsake sensual sins. Now in verse 8 he confronts interpersonal sins. Sin is sin. Lust, anger, it all needs to go.

Warren Wiersbe remarks, “We are so accustomed to anger, critical attitudes, lying, and course humor among believers that we are no longer upset or convicted about these sins. We would be shocked to see a church member commit some sensual sin, but we will watch him lose his temper in a business meeting and call it 'righteous indignation.’”⁸

Paul doesn’t coddle interpersonal sin, but calls for its elimination. The word-picture he uses is of changing clothes. He says we are to “put off” such things (8), and “put on” other things (10). He does the same in Ephesians 4, but there gives even more detail.

Friends, interpersonal sin has the power to destroy our families every bit as much as moral sin. It, too, must be removed, and verse 8 tells us how.

A. The problem begins in the heart. This is precisely where anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language originate. Jesus explains in Matthew 12:34, “For out of the *overflow of the heart* the mouth speaks.” He elaborated in Matthew 15:18-19, “But the things that come out of the mouth come *from the heart*, and these make a man unclean. For *out of the heart* come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”

So communication techniques won’t cut it. Counting to ten isn’t enough. The heart must change, and only Jesus can change the heart.

“Anger” must go (*orge* in the Greek, meaning hot temper, impulsive action that leads to revenge). So must “wrath” (*thumos*, “rage” in the NIV, passion, fury, a passionate outburst). Anger is like the pressure cooker, while rage is like a match in a pile of straw.

They’re like coffee stains on a beautiful dress. Ladies, would you leave the house if there was a huge stain on your white dress? No, you’d get rid of that stain. So too with our anger and wrath. We must strip off both.

With this in mind, I’d like to make a couple of pastoral observations.

1. Anger is a big problem in Christian homes. For the record, anger itself is not sin. It’s merely a God-given emotion that kicks in to tell us action is needed. Ephesians

⁸ Wiersbe, p. 135.

4:26 actually commands us to "Be angry and sin not. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath."

However, though anger is not inherently sinful, it becomes sinful when it's not handled in a Christlike manner. We understand this.

The truth is, we all struggle with sinful anger. Some of us tend to be blow-upers, while others adopt the more justifiable "clam up" approach. But in either case, we're failing to deal with problems in a God-pleasing way.

Let's be honest. Anger is destroying family after family these days, including Christian families. Angry dads. Angry moms. Angry children.

Let's tackle one aspect of the problem. What causes angry kids? There are many factors, but Paul identifies a vital one in verse 21. "Fathers, do not *provoke* your children." We see the same verb in Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."⁹

How do parents provoke or exasperate their children? It happens in two ways according to Ephesians 6:4 First, by not giving them what they need. What do our children need according to Ephesians 6:4? They need two parental activities: "discipline" and "instruction."¹⁰

A sure way to exasperate a child, then, is to refuse to give him what he needs. He needs discipline (NIV, training; AV, nurture; which has to do with structure), and he needs biblical instruction (verbal teaching). So he needs words and action to reinforce the importance of the words.

Some parents talk, talk, talk, but there's no discipline when the instruction isn't heeded. Others use discipline, but neglect the instruction. Both are vital. And the phrase "of the Lord" indicates the goal of our discipline and instruction. This precious child needs to know the Lord and what pleases the Lord.

Dads and moms, if we're not giving both instruction and discipline to our children, we are cultivating the soil of exasperation. To survive in this life, and certainly to experience eternal life, our kids need Christ. Without Christ they don't have the power to deal with the anger in their hearts, any more than we do.

But there's another way to exasperate our children. One is failing to give them what they need. The other is to always give them what they want. That's implied by the term "discipline" (KJV "admonition") in Ephesians 6:4 (*nouthesia* in the Greek). Again, a child needs more than just words. He needs structure and boundaries, which includes loving confrontation and discipline. He needs it because he's a sinner, just like us.

If you want to exasperate your child, pamper him. Defend him when a teacher says discipline is necessary. When his youth leader confronts a sin in his life, tell the child he's a "good boy," and insist that the youth leader doesn't know what he's talking about.

You say, "Well, I can see how that might spoil a child, but how does this contribute to anger?" Let me put it this way, a second pastoral observation.

2. *It's not good when children grow up thinking the world revolves around them.* Why not? Because the world *doesn't* revolve around them. And if they grow up with this expectation, they're heading for a lot of heartache when leave the nest.

We have a generation of children who are growing up thinking that the world revolves around them. But what happens when a child bumps into reality and learns that the world doesn't revolve around him? He gets angry (and remember, anger shows up in

⁹ The NIV says, "Fathers, do no *exasperate* your children."

¹⁰ As the KJV puts it, they need "nurture" and "admonition."

lots of ways). He may sulk, or resort to manipulation, or become violent. But it started with anger, and the anger began in his heart and remained in his heart because, in part, his parents gave him everything he wanted yet failed to give him what he most needed.

Here's the good news. Do you want to prepare your child for life in the real world? Then bring him or her up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord Jesus.

Know this. Heart problems don't stay in the heart, according to rest of the list.

B. The problem surfaces in the mouth. Anger and wrath need to go. But so does "malice" (*kakian*, baseness, depravity, a general term for moral badness). This trait often shows up in hard feelings towards people or with malicious words about people.

Get rid of it. And also "slander" (*blasphemia*). We slander when we speak abusive words, words that injure rather than help.

Finally, "obscene talk" must be eliminated too. Obscenities should not come from our lips. We're talking about words that ought to produce shame for both the speaker and the hearer.

You say, "You're talking about me. My mouth gets me in trouble at times. What can I do about it?"

For starters, don't miss the connection here. Where do speech sins originate? In our *hearts*. So if sinful words are coming out of your mouth, it's because of the desires that are controlling your heart (see James 4:1-3). The solution? Ask, says James 4:3. Ask Jesus Christ to clean up your heart and give you holy desires. Memorize verses like Colossians 3:8-10, and ask a friend to pray for you and hold you accountable to put off the speech of the old man and put on the speech of the new.¹¹

We can't be passive, friends. We must *fight* for this. We must fight to eliminate *moral sins*, and we must fight to rid ourselves of *interpersonal sins*.

III. We must fight to get rid of conversational sins (9-11).

Paul ends verse 8 with the words "from your mouth." Then in verse 9 he picks one particular type of speech that comes from your mouth that must go. *Lying*.

A. We must not lie to each other (9a). "Do not lie to one another." Why this particular sin? It's not that big of a sin, is it? And even if it is, we don't struggle with lying do we? We are Christians!

The truth is, it is a big sin. And yes, Christians struggle with it. It's significant that in Ephesians 4:25, Paul confronts this same sin and puts it at the head of his teaching on communication. Lying must go. Lying actually shows up in our homes in a variety of ways. Let's talk about three.

1. *We do it by avoiding issues.* A wife walks out into the garage and asks her husband, "Dear? Are you upset with me?" And he replies curtly, "No, I'm fine!" You can be sure there's some lying going on in that garage.

How do you deal with interpersonal problems in your family? Ephesians 4:15 calls us to speak the truth in love. Ephesians 4:27 indicates that when we let the sun go down on our wrath, we are actually giving the devil a foothold. So this is serious.

Let's talk about another common way lying shows up. The first is by avoiding issues.

2. *We do it by exaggerating.* A mother tells her teenage son, "You *never* listen to me when I'm talking to you." Granted, he may need this confrontation, but are his mother's words true? "What do you mean, *never*? I listened to you last week that one

¹¹For further help I recommend a book by Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger: Practical Help for the Prevention and Cure of Anger in Children*.

time.” Words like "always" and "never" are seldom true when confronting problems, and they end up short-circuiting productive communication. Here’s another way.

3. *We do it by misrepresenting the facts.* Like when dad asks his daughter, "Did you clean the garage like I asked?" And Sally responds, "Yea, dad. I cleaned the garage." But when questioned further she admits, "Well, no, I didn't clean behind the boxes like you asked, but I cleaned the garage!" Misrepresenting the facts is another form of lying.

Perhaps you’re thinking, “Okay, I can see that lying isn’t a good idea in most cases, but in my house, it’s easier just to lie at times. It keeps the peace. So why get rid of lying?”

B. Here's why (9b-11). Paul mentions three reasons in verses 9-11.

1. *We are new.* "Do not lie to one other, *seeing that* you have put off the old self with its practices." The NIV says, “*since* you have taken off your old self [old man] with its practices [like lying], and have put in the new self."

Why not lie? Why not talk like we did before we became a Christian? Because we are new. Positionally, we've stripped off the old man (that's what we were in Adam). And we've replaced it with a new wardrobe, the new man (that's what we are in Christ).¹²

But not only are we new. There’s a second reason.

2. *We are being renewed.* What's true of the new man? Verse 10 tells us, “...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.” Positionally, we are new. Practically, we are being renewed. Both are true.

And in this renewal process, there is a means (“in knowledge”) and a goal (“in the image of its Creator”). God’s intent is to use the knowledge of His Word to transform us into the image of His Son. Which brings us to the third reason.

3. *Our standard is Christ.* Nothing short of Christlikeness is acceptable for one who is in Christ. God wants His children to resemble His dear Son, and He doesn’t want anything to obscure the reflection of His Son.

Indeed, notice how radical this new-man transformation is, according to verse 11. “Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.”

In the new man, race doesn't divide us (Jew/Gentile). Ceremonial acts don't divide us (circumcision/uncircumcision). Culture doesn't divide us (barbarian, Scythian). And social status doesn't divide us (slave/free).

The point is this. If those worldly distinctions don't divide us, then nothing should, including our communication. If Christ is powerful enough to reconcile natural enemies like Jews and Gentiles, if He can bring together such cultural opposites as refined Greeks and backwoods barbarians, if He can unite the top and the bottom of the economic pile, then we can be sure He can transform our mouths and everything else about us, so that He is put on display for all to see!

And what He intends, we are to pursue. We are to *fight* to get rid of, not only moral and interpersonal sins, but also conversational sins. And this means, to put it positively, that we are to fight, enabled by His grace, to please and resemble Him every time we open our mouths. Here’s a simple, practical action plan for this week.

Putting It Into Practice: Two questions to ask ourselves before we speak...

¹² Using the language of Isaiah 61:10, God has clothed us with "garments of salvation" and arrayed us in a "robe of righteousness."

I'm convinced these two practical questions will revolutionize our family communication. Before I ever speak a word, I need to ask myself.

1. *Would Christ say that?*
2. *Would Christ say it that way?*

*Oh! to be like Thee, blessed Redeemer,
This is my constant longing and prayer;
Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures,
Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear.*

*Oh! to be like Thee, oh! to be like Thee,
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art;
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness;
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.*

Closing Song: #387 "O to Be Like Thee!" (all three verses)
Closing charge: Let the redeemed of the Lord...SAY SO.