

Stop: The Series *Stop Rebelling*

Maybe you saw the video on the news. A DEA agent named Lee Paige was presenting a drug education lecture to youth in Florida. He pulls out a handgun, makes a rambling statement about how he's the only one in the room qualified to handle his Glock .40 and then precedes to shoot himself in the foot.

If that wasn't bad enough, Paige tried to continue the demonstration, and even had an assistant hand him another weapon to display. Needless to say the crowd wasn't about to watch him shoot himself in the other foot and began to shout, "Put it down."

The video was all over TV and the internet so Paige sued the DEA for releasing it.

In the lawsuit, which was thrown out of court, he said he's been the "target of jokes, derision, ridicule, and disparaging comments" directed at him in restaurants, grocery stores, and airports. Paige, who writes that he was "once regarded as one of the best undercover agents, if not the best, in the DEA," claimed that because of the video he can no longer work undercover and he is no longer "permitted or able to give educational motivational speeches and presentations."

If I was in that audience I would have been real nervous if Mr. Paige wanted to handle another weapon and continue his demonstration.

Now of course we chuckle at that who story. How could a guy who's a trained DEA agent shoot himself in the foot?

But now, before you laugh too hard at Lee Paige, let me ask you something. Are you guilty of shooting yourself in the foot? Not once. but over and over again? It hurts when you shoot yourself in the foot, right? So why would we keep on doing it?

We're in a series of messages were calling "Stop." And what we're doing is we're making our way through a list of 6 things that the Bible says we're supposed to stop doing.

These are 6 things that every one of us is susceptible to doing. These are things that are even more harmful than shooting ourselves in the foot. In fact the results are more damaging and more painful than aiming a Glock .40 at your foot and pulling the trigger.

So why do we do it? What do we do? And how can we stop?

So far we've looked at 3 areas. Stop making excuses, stop complaining, and stop comparing yourself with others. Today we're going to tackle another area where we're

all susceptible. Today we're focus in on the biblical commands to stop rebelling.

Now at this point might be thinking, “Wait a minute. I can buy into the fact that I tend to make excuses for myself. And I can agree that I have a problem with complaining. And I can even accept that I compare my self with others. All those things make sense to me. But now you want me to believe that I’m rebelling against almighty God? That going just a little bit too far. Complainer, yea; rebel, no.”

I want to propose to you this morning that no matter who you are, believer or unbeliever, Christian or still trying to figure religion out for yourself, whoever you are, we all have a bad habit of shooting our self in the foot with our rebellion.

It’s fascinating to me how in so many areas we all want to try to play God. We talked about this a few weeks ago when we talked about the statements people make that go something like this: “I can’t believe in a God who would condemn anyone to eternal punishment. I can’t believe in a God who would judge someone who hasn’t heard the message of the gospel. I can’t believe in a God who would say that there’s only one way to heaven.”

As we unpacked those statements we saw that what people who make them are really saying is, “I wouldn’t do those things. Those things don’t make sense to me.”

In other words they’re saying “I can only believe in a God who acts the way I would act.”

The problem with that line of reasoning is it reduces God down to our level of understanding, as if God wasn’t far bigger and His thoughts weren’t immeasurably vaster than ours.

The nature of God, of heaven and hell, and salvation and eternal life aren’t things we’re going to figure out on our own.

That’s why we need the Bible. The Bible is God’s revelation to us. It tells us that when we trust Jesus Christ as Savior our sins are forgiven.

Listen to this: *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* (II Corinthians 5:20-21)

Jesus Christ, who was sinless, took our sins upon Himself and God imputes His righteousness to us.

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption-- that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD." (I Corinthians 1:30-31)

Jesus Christ is our righteousness as we stand before God.

...and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith. (Philippians 3:9)

That's not a concept we'd ever dream up on our own. We figure that somehow God will accept us because we're good. The God of the Bible accepts us because Jesus alone is good and we're in Him by faith.

So, if you have trusted Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness then positionally you're holy. As the Bible says in Ephesians you are *accepted in the beloved*.

We stand as holy ones in Christ. But what we are by position and what we are by practice can be two very different things. Positionally in Christ we're holy but practically our day-to-day lives vary in purity.

We still have to deal with emotions, feelings, selfishness, the old nature.

I. Even Christians Are Rebels At Heart

Open your Bibles to Colossians chapter 1 page 1154

At times I hear teachers on the radio or I read in commentaries statements like these:

"If you're really a believer in Jesus Christ then all your old ways will change. If you're really saved then you won't practice sin any more. If you're a genuine Christian then you may stumble once and a while but you won't repeatedly sin."

I have to tell you, I shudder when I hear statements like that. We're doing Christians a real disservice when we misapply scripture.

The truth is that any Christian is capable of committing the most horrendous sin if they're don't understand the Bible's instruction for dealing with temptation. If they don't understand the power of God through the Holy Spirit.

Today we're going to look at several areas of rebellion that are listed for us in the book of Colossians.

As we do, remember that Colossians was written to Christians. Just to get us oriented to the Book of Colossians, lets start with verses 1 & 2.

Read 1:1,2

Colosse was a city in Asia Minor located in the Lycos Valley by a mountain pass that led from, Ephesus to the East. An apostle of Jesus named Paul had started the church among pagan idol worshippers. Now he's writing back to them and notice how he addresses them.

These people are saints and faithful brethren in Christ. They're trusted Christ as the only way to heaven.

They're in Christ standing in His righteousness so Paul addresses them as saints.

He doesn't say "I'm writing to beat up on you guys because you're such a bunch of sinners." He says "Grace and peace. God's our father and Jesus is our Lord."

That's the people who he's writing to. Remember, we stand as holy ones in Christ. But what we are by position and what we are by practice can be two very different things. So in chapter 3 Paul's going to correct their practice.

Now follow this. We're going to be given 2 lists of areas of rebellion. The first starts with actions and moves to motives. The second starts with motives and moves into actions.

Is your foot getting sore from all those shots? Are you tired of limping? Are you feeling foolish because you though you could handle life. You trusted Christ as Savior. You go to Faith Community Church and hear all those amazing sermons. You're trained.

Here it is. Just stop!

I. Even Christians Are Rebels At Heart

II. But Christians Are Rebels Who Have Been Given A New Nature

Therefore, because of your position... Because, verse 3, *you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God* stop shooting yourself in the foot!

Read 3:5

Put these things to death. Stop. Look at the first thing: fornication. It was going on in the lives of these people in the church. What should they do?

The sinful action of immorality occurs because of uncleanness and an unholy affection which comes from a perverted, passionate heart. All that comes out of the covetousness which is at the core of our being.

Have you ever noticed that human beings always seem to want what's forbidden? What it boils down to is that people are idolatrous by nature. Whenever we say by our actions, "I want what I want no matter what God says," you're worshipping yourself instead of God.

This is why situation ethics don't work. It's why Communism couldn't build a workers paradise. It's why utopian ideas always fail.

The root problem is sin; a desire to have. Of course when we become believers in Jesus all those wrong desires just vanish, right?

Let me make this clear. When we trust Christ as savior we become a child of God. We're born again into the family of God.

When we receive Christ, God comes to take up residence in our body through the Holy Spirit.

God does give us a new nature. God does give us new desires. But, the old desires don't diminish automatically and they never just go away altogether.

When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus in John 3, this is what He said; this is so profound.

He said, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* (John 3:6)

A Christian has 2 births. The first is a physical birth. The second is a spiritual birth.

Flesh can't give birth to spirit. All the good works we can do won't produce a spiritual birth. That comes by faith.

And not only that but the spiritual birth doesn't eliminate the physical. We still have what the Bible calls, "the flesh."

The spiritual gives us the power to deal with the physical, but it doesn't eliminate it. That's why the Bible says that we have a responsibility to put to death the desires of the flesh.

Christians need to commit themselves to stop rebelling. We need to put off the old and put on the new.

The Bible says, *Exercise yourself toward godliness.* (I Timothy 4:7)

So what does God mean when He says to us, *put to death your members which are on the earth?*

Are we supposed to sleep on beds of nails and abuse our bodies? Are we supposed to kill of the desires by physically mistreating ourselves?

In Hinduism, suffering is seen as the result of karmic debt owed from a prior incarnation; we suffer through, building up "good karma" to balance out what is, ultimately, our own personal fault. Mastering the flesh is part of the process of moving forward in reincarnation. To Buddhists, life is suffering because we desire; this desire must be extinguished by walking the Eightfold Noble Path.

The Bible say this: sin comes from the heart. You can't change the heart by torturing the body. That's why the NIV paraphrases this verse *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature.*

This chapter starts off by saying, *you were raised with Christ.* Your sphere of life is from above. You're a child of God, therefore deal with sin in your life. The original Greek tense that's used suggests a decisive action. Stop. Do it now.

Positionally you've already died with Christ. Positionally you've already been raised. Now believe that it's true. Don't go on living as if you're alive to sin and dead to God.

If that's the way you're living you've got it flipped around. Live according to your

heavenly nature.

Our culture is obsessed with sexuality and sensuality. We're told it really doesn't matter what we do in our personal lives.

God says that fornication is sin. Sin destroys. Sin is an affront to God. Sin is a perversion of the very character and nature of a Christian.

The word "fornication" is a translation of the Greek noun *porneia*. It's the basis for our word pornography. When it's used by itself it means "any and all types of sexual sin."

Ultimately sexual sin has its root in a love of self. It's a worship of self instead of a worship of God. Our culture wants to treat sexual sins as just an inconsequential matter of personal choice.

But now watch this: *A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.* (Ephesians 5:30-32)

God uses the term "one flesh" to describe the intimate union of a husband and wife. And He says the oneness of a husband and wife are a parallel of the oneness of a believer and God.

The sexual union is part of that oneness. It's the most intimate expression of the joining together of the couple. It's a sacred oneness that God has designed. When a husband and wife come together in physical unity, it's a worship experience illustrating the intimate union we have with God.

Have you ever thought about that before? You are worshipping God in that act.

Now look at this: *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."* (I Corinthians 6:15-16)

We're not just talking about some physical, biological action here. This isn't just some biological, animal behavior.

If I as a Christian have a sexual union with someone who is not my wife then I've merged Jesus Christ into that illicit union. Wow! Sex is not just physical, it's spiritual.

If you follow God He'll never lead you into sin. If you follow God He'll lead you in paths of righteousness for His name's sake!

Put to death your members which are on the earth. Why?

1.) **Read verse 6**

God's wrath is coming because of sin. God's not some cosmic killjoy God's not sadistically implanting desires within us just so He can torture us by telling us not to fulfill those desires.

God judges sin because it's a affront to His character, because it brings such destruction, and because it distorts the beauty of our relationship with Him.

(Romans 1:18) *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*

God judges sin. His wrath is coming upon an unbelieving world. So here's the question: Why would a Christian want to commit the very thing that causes damnation? Sinful actions characterize the unbelieving world. It should be unthinkable that they would characterize our life.

2.) **Read verse 7** This is what you used to do. These are the characteristics of your old life. Once you have a new resurrected life, why would you want to walk around in your grave clothes? As Christians we're to put that stuff off.

So God says, "Stop rebelling in your outward actions," and then it's like He ratchets the whole deal up to another level. Now He goes right to the emotions and feelings.

Read verse 8

Once again, it's obvious that Christians don't automatically stop these things. Here's they typical New Testament scenario. Philippians is a letter to a church that is congratulated on their faith, hope, and love but still need to be hit between the eyes with a challenge to stop rebelling.

The biblical pattern is to put off and to put on. The word translated “put off” in verse 8 is *apotithemi*. *Apo* is the preposition “from” and *tithemi* is the verb which means “to place or to lay.”

It literally means “to take off like a piece of clothing.” It’s used in Acts 7:58 *And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

Here’s what God wants us to grab a hold of: If you’re living a sinful life it’s like you’re walking around in nasty, filthy, torn rags. You’re a child of the King but instead of dressing like royalty you’re dressed like a beggar.

The truth is, positionally your wearing a robe of righteousness so get rid of filthy clothes. Put off what doesn’t befit you.

And look at this list. This is really hitting at the heart issues. Smoldering anger turns to blazing wrath which exhibits itself in malice towards others which erupts into blasphemy and filthy speech.

G Campbell Morgan who preached in the early 1900’s called these “The Sins In Good Standing.” He said, “We are so accustomed to anger, critical attitudes, lying, and coarse humor among believers that we are no longer bothered by these sins. We would be shocked to see a church member commit some sensual sin, but we will watch him loose his temper in a church business meeting and excuse it as insignificant.” The truth is, fornication is wrong. Uncleaness and idolatry are sin. But so are anger, malice, and wrath.

The parallel passage to Colossians 3 is Ephesians chapter 4. I’d like us to turn there and see just a couple of verses.

Ephesians chapter 4 pg 1148

Some of these verses are going to sound familiar because we’ve read them several times in this series but this is the heart of rebellion. These are the areas we just want to gloss over. That we don’t want to deal with.

Read verses 29-32

Notice, it’s *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth.*
Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with

all malice.

Does that seem impossible? I was leading a Bible study on Ephesians 4 and after listing to me zero in on words like “no” and “all” and “every” a woman spoke up and said what everybody else in the room was probably thinking but were afraid to verbalize. She said, “Wait a minute. No body lives that way.”

It is if it was just up to us that’s true, but listen to this; (Colossians 3:3) *you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

So what’s your responsibility? **Read Ephesians 4:22**
Stop rebelling. Put off the torn rags of your old nature.

How do we do that? How do rebels like us stop rebelling? It’s not natural.

Back to Colossians 3 Read verses 9-11

Wait a minute. Do we put off the old or have we already done it? Catch this now because this is the key to stopping the rebellion.

I. Christians Are Still Rebels At Heart

II. Christians Are Rebels Who Have Been Given A New Nature

III. The Key To Putting The Brakes On Rebellion Is To Appropriate That Which Has Already Been Done Through Christ

Romans 6, Ephesians 2, Colossians 3 – they all tell us the truth that a believer has died to the old and been raised to the new. When we baptize we baptize by immersion because the Bible says, *we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* (Romans 6:4)

Just like positionally we’re righteous in Christ, positionally we’ve died with Christ so the Biblical command is believe it’s true and live like it.

Positionally our old life is gone. New life began the moment we’re born again.

In everyday life it doesn’t seem that way. It seems like the old sin nature is alive and well. That’s because we have habit patterns of sin that have engrained themselves in

our lives.

Everything around us says, “You’re it. You’re in charge. You’re all that matters.” And in the middle of all that noise God is quietly saying, “I’m in charge. Jesus Christ is all that ultimately matters.”

Are you tired of shooting yourself in the foot? Are you tired of carrying around the burden of trying to be in charge, when you’re not?

God is speaking this morning. Here’s what He’s saying to you. *And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.* (Romans 6:13)

What area of rebellion would you like to eliminate from your life today? What’s your plan to begin?