

Murder for Higher

Convicted Killers of the Old Self

October 30, 2022

Today we're talking about putting on the *new you* by putting *off* the old. *And* – how pulling *that* trigger means having the mind of a convicted *killer!* But before we *can*, we need a plan, and that starts with scouting out the situation, so answer this: **Who's at home in your heart?** Has Jesus already moved in? Is everyone else out? Are you *sure*?



I only ask because back in 1995 just over in Enumclaw, 20-year-old Amber Dawn rented a top-floor apartment and for six months complained to the landlord of some squirrel or raccoon that kept making noises in the attic. But then she noticed the occasional soda went missing from her fridge. Probably her brother stopping by she thought – so it wasn't until the day she called in sick and settled into a bath that she leaned back and looked up to see the always-sealed attic hatch, *open*. And it clicked; she wasn't alone and for six months, someone was living in her attic! And that's what the cops found after she slowly snuck out and ran make the call.



Spooky story – but it proves a point: **we can't know who's hiding in our house until we light up every corner.** And we must not ever *ignore* the warning signs of a possible threat coming from inside our own house. Cuz as *creepy* as a silent stalker in the *attic* is – there's *nothing* more serious than the one lurking in the shadows of our own heart. Because *we're* the managers of *that* property and the most prominent and powerful guest in the universe has made reservations for today!



Here I am! [says Jesus] I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I *will* come in... – Revelation 3:20 NIV



So, you got His room ready? Or are you allowing your last guests a late check-out? Well, *whatever you* love gets the room in your heart, but the longer you let them live with you, the harder it is to get 'em to *leave*. Because **as they makes themselves at home, you make them the master.** Cuz our love for *them* means everyday *we'll* choose to do whatever makes our guests most comfortable. Which explains why we *must*:

Above all else, *guard* your heart, for everything you do flows from *it*. – Proverbs 4:23 NIV

So we gotta make up our *mind* to make our *heart* a **hospitable home for good and godly guests;** but a **hostile house to the hoodlums who've held us back before.** Because, we've been taught:

With regard to your *former* way of life, to put *off* your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made *new* in the attitude of your *minds*; and to put *on* the *new* self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. – Ephesians 4:22-24 NIV

However – Paul goes *on* to give us some strong *specific* strategies in *today's* wrinkle from Romans:

Therefore, brothers, we have an *obligation* — but it is *not* to the sinful nature, to live according to it [that's the *old you*]. For if you live according to the sinful nature, *you will die*; but if *by the Spirit* you put to death the misdeeds of the body, *you will live*, because those who are led by the *Spirit* of God are *sons of God* [that's the *new you*]. – Romans 8:12-14 NIV



But here's the *problem*: **the old you didn't live alone**. Notice that the old self included "**deceitful desires**" and also... the "**misdeeds of the body**". And they're both *plural*. The "old you" crew wasn't just the *liar* – but the *gossip*, the *sneak*, the *lustful*, the *angry*, the *afraid*, the *superficial*, the *manipulator*, and the *cheat*! And they *all* gotta go! And *you* gotta be the wet blanket that puts an *end* to all their fun! In fact, **they gotta be put down... for good. You got the stomach for that?** Well before you answer, I want to draw your attention to the *severity* of Paul's warning: He says that if you allow them to live *inside*, "**you will die**". But if you *want* to put them out, they *have to* be: "**put to death**".

Which means, whether or not we *admit* it, **you and I are in a death-match with sin**. So as we work to muster the courage to master our enemy, *remember*, it's kill or be killed! And if they're coming for us, from *inside* our own house, we need to get a plan together – *today*! And that means *three* things: **Knowing our enemy**, **finding their weakness**, and **making the kill**.

And we've already taken our first step in **knowing our enemy**. It's the *whole* gang behind the old you. It's the "**deceitful desires**" and "**misdeeds of the body**" that gave the old you its sinful nature. *But* we can get a glimpse of their crafty *tactics* by the reassuring *reminder* that Paul opens with:

We have an *obligation*, but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it – Romans 8:12 NIV

Pause. **Why would Paul have to encourage us to not help the enemy?!** Are we really *that* stupid?! Well... *kinda*. Ask yourself, have you ever felt *obligated*, *ordered*, or *commanded* by sin? *Sure*. We *all* have. Because **we can get stuck in a particular pattern of bad behavior** by acquiring an *addiction* like *gossip* or *gambling* – or *inherently* having a destructive *disposition* like *anger* or *anxiety*. But *either way*, we can falsely *feel* like we have very little *choice* in the matter.



And that's because **sin is a subtle manipulator and rarely a forceful fiend**! It's *smart*, it know *us* from the inside out, and it'll do what it takes to stay *unnoticed* in your attic. And that's all it needs to succeed, because **that whole old-you-crew is a cancer**. Like the gang of liars that Paul warns *Timothy* about:

Shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their *message* will spread like cancer. – 2 Timothy 2:16-17 NKJ

And cancer spreads quickly and quietly cuz **its strategy is to lay low and outlast by weakening its opponent and strengthening itself at a rate we're willing to ignore...** until *it's* big enough for battle.

So just know, **every moment you let the old you live, you're aiding and abetting an enemy that's using you to gather its strength to take you out. Which is why there can be no truce with untruth!** You *can't* make peace with *greed* and *lust*, *lying* and *cheating*, *fear* and *anger* or *gossip* and *depression*, *drugs* and *pornography*, and *power* and *approval!* Their destructiveness *defines* them!

So **are you treating the whole old-you-crew as the enemy?** Cuz you *are* at war and every moment you forget to fight, *they* gain ground! And I'm not asking if you've *won* – we're just looking for *step* one; do you *know* your enemy and realize you're *already* at war? Hope so, because after you know your enemy, *step two* is easy; **finding their weakness.**

Don't forget that the sinful nature of our old self enemy is rooted in two things “**deceitful desires**” and “**misdeeds of the body**”. *Desires* happen on the *inside* and *misdeeds* on the *outside*. And you know how to kill sinful thoughts *and* actions? Buckle up; **don't do them.** *Wow Noah! Don't do sin – what a game-changer!* I get it, easier said than done – but we'll get there, just follow me on this.



Remember, like a *cancer* or a *parasite*, the old you *needs* a host home to live. **Apart from you, they lose life support!** But that means their supply line has to be *completely* severed. We don't *partially* remove tumors – because having *any* of the enemy left means the battle *could* begin again. Therefore, our endgame is clear: **get them out and cut them off!** *Completely!* So *why don't we?* Why can't we just look sin square in the eyes and say, “NO!”? Well, it's because of *who* the old you *is*. Right there in its name; old YOU. That's a *version* of *you* and let's face it, *you are* your favorite person! Are you sure you're convicted enough to kill 'em off? Probably not. Even Paul struggled:

I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ... Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is *sin* living in me that does it. – Romans 7:18,20 NIV



The old you knows right where *you're* weak as well – and will always argue the new you into a little mercy. Just like your kids who know the tone and face that makes the case that makes you fold; **“I know we quit smoking, but it reminds me of you, can we keep just one pack – for old time's sake?”** I mean, how are you gonna kill that? *You won't.* Which brings us to our last step, **making the kill.**

You ever have mice? I had a childhood friend with one as a pet – so when I see one under a house, I'm like “They're kinda cute.” And it takes my nurse wife to remind me that these little rascals are pure evil!

They're responsible for Hantavirus, Salmonella, Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis, as well as the ticks and fleas that spread Lyme Disease and... the *Bubonic Plague!* So they gotta die! But whether it's my *compassion* or my wife's *fear* – it's *hard* to personally put these little old guys down. So *what do we do?* Call the exterminator! *They* know *all* about them and are experts at working with you to light up every corner of your house in order to entirely eradicate 'em.

And that's the same way we take out the whole old you crew hiding in our heart; call for help. Did you notice who Paul says *does* the deed? "if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live."

This enemy is only caught and killed when *we* trust the *Spirit* enough to let *Him* do what it takes to finish off the old you and make the move to the new. **Because if Jesus is moving in, we've got to get behind His plan to get the old you out.** Which means turning over control to do what we can't.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."- Matthew 26:41 NIV



And that means **we gotta be clear on our role in the work of the Holy Spirit.** Putting the old you crew to death "by the Spirit" does *NOT* mean the Spirit is some kind of magical tool or nuclear weapon that *we* conjure up to conquer sin for us. It means following Him and the orders He's giving and trusting that *His* plan will lead to living. **It means we are in the Holy Spirit's hands, He is NOT in ours!**



It's like the difference between a rowboat and a sailboat. We can control a rowboat all by ourselves; we grab the oars and we're off under our own power. But a sailboat is different. *We* hoist the sails and steer the rudder; but we are utterly *dependent* on the wind for power.



Being "led by the Spirit" is like piloting a sailboat. And depending on Him means **we must be ready to hear from Him and be directed by Him.** But since this is a mission to *kill*, that also means being ready for battle on the Spirit's behalf. And guess what weapon we use?



Take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. **[Know why?]**
– Ephesians 6:17 NIV



The Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; It judges the *thoughts* and *attitudes* of the *heart*. *Nothing* in all creation is *hidden* from God's sight. – Hebrews 4:12-13 NIV

In short, **God's Word reveals who's who of the old and new inside of you.** It lights up your whole heart to separate the subtle squatters from the guests of honor. And it paves the way for the Spirit to search and destroy any untruth you've been letting live for too long. Because the old you can run but it *can't* hide and it *won't* survive the killing *conviction* of the Spirit and truth.

In the end, **either God's Word will keep us from sin, or sin will keep us from God's Word.** But whenever *we're* in *God's Word*, *It's* in *us*. And that's how **you decide if your heart's a home for godly guests or harmful hoodlums.** So if you're *tired* of trying to *ignore* the creepers you got living in the dark parts of your heart – kick them *out* once and for all! And this week, let's put *in*, light up, and live *out* the words of God – *from the heart* – so the *Spirit* can kick our and kill off our *old* self, to make way for the best guests to ever enter our chests. Jesus and the whole *new* you crew.

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.