

# Flood Bath

## Drowning Out Clinging Crud

October 11, 2026



Today we're learning how to stop *stalling* and start *living our best life*! Cuz we *all* have a version of ourselves we'd love to lose – and we all have a plan of *attack*: *quit* the habit, *bite* the tongue, and *white-knuckle* our way to a better self. But *somehow*, the harder we *fight* our failures, the *longer* they *last*! And that's *discouraging* and *demoralizing* for every person making an *effort* to make a *change*. So, before we waste *another* week wrestling *ourselves*, we should stop and *rethink*: *how do you leave your old life to live your best life?* And I mean *permanently*.



Cuz every human has two options: **live life with the identity we're created to carry**, or **feel the frustration of living different from your design**. You know, the way a *sandwich* is *great* at being a sandwich – but its *whole* existence is *frustrating* as a hammer. Well, as Bruce talked about last week, we were *designed* to be *God's kids* – and *therefore*, to *live* as a soul who *uses* a *human* to get around; so it's *frustrating* to live any *other* way. In fact, it's so frustrating we gave *every other* way a *dirty* name: *Sin*. Cuz

All wrongdoing is sin... [but] anyone born of God [aka anyone who adopts the right identity as His kid] does not continue to sin; – 1 John 5:17-18 NIV



And that word for “*wrongdoing*” literally just means **“That which is out of harmony with what is right and fit.”** So, yeah, *everything* stays *sin* til we *accept* our *right* identity as *God's kid* and *fit* it in the *life* we *live*! And *that's* where *religion* comes in to tell us *how to live* to *have* that identity, *right*?

*No!* That *never* works! And yet, that's *still* the *popular* approach of religion and philosophy *throughout the world*: **“Live right to become right”** – even though, we know **change won't last when suppression is the strategy**.



Don't believe me? Let's *test* it: for the next *ten* seconds, whatever you do – *do not* think about a polar bear. Ready? *Go...* *don't* picture the *color*, the *size*, or that *one* chasing a *seal* you saw on *Discovery*... *How'd that go?*

Back in 1987, psychologist Daniel Wegner ran that *exact* experiment – and everyone told *not* to think about a white bear ended up thinking about it *more* than people told to think about it *on purpose*! Cuz to make sure we're *not* thinking about something – part of our brain has to keep *checking* whether we *are* thinking about it! “*Still* not thinking about the bear?” “Anybody see the bear?” **“Good – whatever you do, don't think about that giant furry bear!”** Which means, **the harder we restrain something, the more we rehearse it!** And *that's* why every *rule* we make for ourselves eventually *backfires*. Cuz when my whole *identity* is based on *avoiding* something, *whatever* I'm avoiding is still a *main character* in my *story*! And Paul says *all* our “*don't* lists” have the same *flaw*:

[Rules like] “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!” ... have an *appearance* of wisdom ... but they lack any value in *restraining* sensual indulgence. – Colossians 2:21, 23 NIV

Rules can *restrain* our hands – but they can’t *restrain* our hearts. Cuz **rules don’t refill our hearts!** At best, rules can *remove* something from our heart, but the *absence* can make the heart *grow fonder* and you’ll find yourself *more attracted* to what you’re *missing* – the way the polar bear *pops up* when we try to *cut it out*. So, in the end the truth is, **you can’t subtract your way to success.**

Which is why killing off your *frustrating* old life of sin *can’t* just be aimed at *stopping* something – **it has to be aimed at *starting something!*** And Wegner *stumbled* onto it when he gave *another* group something to think about *instead*: a red Volkswagen. Think about *that*, and *voilà!* The bear *disappeared!* So, according to *science*, the cure for a white bear is a red Volkswagen... and according to *Scripture*, the cure for the *old* you is a *new* you:



Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and [that way, you] do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. – Romans 13:14 NIV



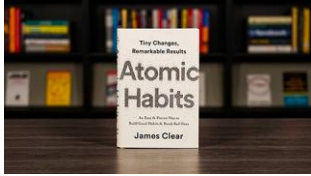
[Or as Paul tells the Galatians] Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. – Galatians 5:16 NIV



Notice the order! It doesn’t say, **“Stop gratifying the flesh and then you’ll look like Jesus and walk by the Spirit.”** The *putting on* comes *first* – and the *not thinking about it* just *follows!* Like we’ve said: **real life change requires an exchange.** And Paul beat modern psychology by 1,900 years!



[You were taught] to put off your old self ... and to put on the new self ... [So] each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully ... Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work ... that they may have something to share – Ephesians 4:22–28 NIV



Lying out – truth in. Stealing out – sharing in. **God never says stop without handing us a start** cuz God knows how to *handle our design* better than us. Replacing is how He does *everything*: **He never removes darkness – He turns on the lights!** And in 1815, Scottish preacher Thomas Chalmers explained *why*: the human heart *can’t* stay *empty* – so the *only* way to *lose* an old love is to *gain* a *better* one. He called it *The Expulsive Power Of A New Affection*. It’s like getting over an ex – you *don’t* do it by trying *hard* not to think about them; it just happens when somebody *better* moves in!

But *better* what? Better behaviors? Nope – that’s just **“live right to become right”** again! The bottom line is: **new behaviors don’t change our old identity – a new identity changes our old behaviors!** And the *psychology* is starting to catch up with *Scripture* as we saw in *Atomic Habits*, cuz James Clear explained that most of us try to change *what* we do when we *should* be changing *who* we are – cuz **“the goal is not to read a book, the goal is to become a reader.”** And he demonstrates the *difference* using two people refusing a cigarette. One says **“No thanks, I’m trying to quit.”** The other, **“No thanks, I’m not a smoker.”** **Same** aim, but one’s trying to *stop* while the other’s already *started* a new identity!



And researchers *tested* it on the toughest crowd on earth: preschoolers. They gave 180 four- and six-year-olds a *boring* computer task and asked them to be a *good helper* for *ten whole minutes* – with a *better game nearby*. One group was told to ask themselves, “*Am I working hard?*” A *second* group used their own *name*: “*Is Billy working hard?*” And the *third* put on a cape and asked themselves, “*Is Batman working hard?*” Wanna guess who *won*? The *further* kids got from “*me*,” the *longer* they lasted – and the little *caped* crusaders worked the *longest*! And now, psychologists *call* the phenomenon *the Batman Effect*.

So apparently, science discovered what Sunday school teachers have known forever: sometimes **the best way to change a behavior is assigning an identity that behaves how we want!** For us, however, lasting change takes a little more; cuz *Batman* only works when the *costume’s on*. And *self-help* says: “**Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become**” – which technically means you’re still *earning* it by actions! But the Gospel *isn’t* earning – it’s *receiving*. Cuz Jesus came to let us know: the election already got called before we cast a single vote:

**[Cuz:]** To all who *did receive Him*, to those who *believed* in His name, He gave the right to become children of God – John 1:12 NIV

Notice: we don’t *achieve* that right, we *receive* it! Remember the sandwich? You don’t *fix* a *frustrated* sandwich by teaching it a better *hammering* technique. You let it *be a sandwich*! And for us – *being who we really are* isn’t just a mindset shift; it means being *filled* with God’s Spirit and God’s truth about who we are. And God doesn’t fill us halfway – His filling doesn’t just *fit* into our lives – it *overwhelms* them and *overflows* them!



You ever clean out a *jar* that was filled with something *gross*? Lord knows *I* have – and there’s just *no way* to *scrape* out all the *crud* that *clings* to the corners. But I’ll *bet* we’ve *all* found the same kitchen-sink *hack*: **point the spigot at the opening and let it run!** Cuz eventually, it’ll *overflow* and *flood the crud* out until there’s *nothing* left – leaving it *cleaned* from the *inside out*. Right?! You *don’t* clean the jar so the water can go in – the water goes in to *clean* the jar! Well it works the *same* way with us: **we don’t clean up our act so the new you can move in – the new you moves in to clean up your act!** Killing off the *sin* of our *old* less-than-perfect life *isn’t* accomplished by *scraping* it out – it’s done by *drowning* it out! We *fill* ourselves with the Spirit that *defines* our true *identity* until it *spills* out into our *actions* and totally *replaces* our old ways; **we fill to spill to make the kill!** And I know that *real* change comes from *filling* our lives with *identity*, not *actions* – cuz *I’ve* lived *both*!

At *twelve*, I decided to become a rock guitarist – so I got a *job* to get the *guitar*, grew my *hair* to get the *look*, and got an *attitude* to get the *attention*. I used *behaviors* to chase an *identity*... and somehow, never got a record deal. But – the *second* I had kids, I *became* a dad. I had the *kid* – so I got the *crib*, I had the *mess* – so I got the *diapers*, and I had the *headache* – so I got the *pacifiers*!

Nobody had to *scrape* the old me out – he just got crowded out! Cuz my *behavior* changed when my *identity* already had. But our jar can't run its *own* tap. So *where* does the new life come from?



[Well, Jesus] poured out His life unto death [So that] – Isaiah 53:12 NIV

God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit – Romans 5:5 NIV



*That's the Good News of the Gospel in a nutshell; Jesus was poured out so we could be poured into!* And the *only* qualification is *thirst*:

Let anyone who is *thirsty* come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me ... rivers of living water will flow from within them. – John 7:37–38 NIV



So *here's* the whole message in just *three* words: **Flood the crud!** Practically, that means we stop trying to *restrain* – and start trying to replace. Scrolling at 1 a.m.? Don't just *block* the app – read *one* psalm before the phone. Itching to *share* some gossip? *Text* somebody some *encouragement* instead. Spinning with *worry*? Turn every fear into an out-loud **"thank You."** And with your new identity – replace, **"I can't,"** with, **"I don't"** – cuz you're too busy doing what God's kids *do*! So, **Don't just give something up – take something up!** Like Paul says separately:



Do not get drunk on wine ... Instead, be filled with the Spirit – Ephesians 5:18 NIV

[Cuz] 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 – Romans 8:13 NIV

See it? **We put sin to death by the Spirit – when we're filled with the Spirit!** It's just something that naturally happens – cuz new and better things have a way of making us forget all the old crud that was clinging to every corner of our old life. So, how do you leave your old life to live your best life? You *kill* it – by *filling* yourself so full of the Spirit's truth about *who you are* that it *spills* into your life, leaving no room for *who you were*.

[That's how you] Get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the Word planted in you, which can save you. [if you let it *change* you!] – James 1:21 NIV

Cuz all we're doing every Sunday is *planting God's Word* to *replace earth's identity* – every Sunday, you come *here* to sit still and get *filled* with the truth about *who you are* cuz **you know your spirit has a suspicious thirst for an identity in eternity**; and you *know* this life is *only* frustrating when you let yourself *live* like a dirty-jar sandwich-hammer! So, if you want to see how *good* it can get, don't stop there – **point God's Word at that opening in your heart and let it run!** And boy –

[I pray] that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. – Ephesians 3:19 NIV

Cuz you won't just see who you *are*, you'll *flood the crud* and *forget* the frustration of who you *were*!