

WE ARE SICK

We are all sick people. In the truest sense, we are spiritually dead. In another sense, we are alive but terminally ill due to our sins.

Luke 5:31 - *"It is not those who are healthy who need a doctor, but those who are sick."*

Ephesians 4:20-24 - *"...assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."*

Underline words that describe the old self that we are called to put off. How do these words remind us of the sickness of sin that is still present with us?

Small group discussion: *How do we balance viewing ourselves as the new person we are in Christ and wrestling with the ongoing presence of the old self? Why must we acknowledge both the old self and the new self?*

We are Engaged in a Continual Fight

Romans 7:21-25 - *So I discover this law: When I want to do what is good, evil is present with me. For in my inner self I delight in God's law, but I see a different law in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind, I myself am serving the law of God, but with my flesh, the law of sin.*

Temptation Never Lets Up

Galatians 5:16-18 - *I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

Small group discussion: *How do you see this continual fight show up in everyday life? How does your Christian experience reflect the teaching in Romans 7 and Galatians 5?*

GOSPEL THIEVES

There is something within us (indwelling sin) that is drawn to temptation and sin despite being saved and set apart for the glory and worship of God. This is the remaining sickness within us. There are numerous temptations found in numerous places as we live, work, play, and rest. These **Gospel thieves** seek to undercut the truth and power of the Gospel in our lives. Like the serpent in the Garden of Eden, these Gospel thieves argue that God is not enough. They also argue that God is withholding something from us that would make our lives better.

Small group discussion: *Review and discuss this list of Gospel thieves. How have you seen them threaten to undercut the Gospel in your life? Put an asterisk next to them. What other Gospel thieves would you add to this list?*

1. **Legalism:** God is a harsh master, so I need to do everything I can to measure up.
2. **License:** God's rules are too strict, so I may as well not try since I won't measure up anyway.

3. **Self-Righteousness:** God blesses those who do well, and I do better than most.
4. **Self-Pity:** God blesses other people but not me. Woe is me!
5. **Unforgiveness:** God forgives and I know I should, but this person or situation is just too much!
6. **Bitterness:** God is sovereign, people are sinful, and life gave me lemons. I'll just push through life with low-grade anger and frustration toward life and everyone around me.
7. **Worldliness:** God didn't save me to be bored and miserable, and it's not necessarily sinful to live like the people in our culture. The Gospel saves me from sin but not from a fun and successful life.
8. **Discontentment:** God is my Provider, but it would be nice to have a little more in life. If I just had enough I could finally be happy.

Getting to the Heart of Our Sin

When we have a fever, our body temperature rises several degrees above normal. Typically, a fever is a sign that our bodies are fighting some sort of underlying infection. If you have a bacterial infection, taking Tylenol can help with the fever, but it won't kill the infection. Treating the symptoms won't cure the underlying illness. When we are applying Gospel medicine in times of temptation and sin, it is vital that we get to the root cause of the issues and not just the symptoms.

Mark 7:20-23 - *And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of people's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, self-indulgence, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a person."*

We need to search ourselves and strive to see the root causes of our sin. Here are a few examples of getting to the root of sin:

Fruit	Potential Root
Angry outbursts when things don't go as planned	A desire for control; bitterness toward God's providence
Overcommitting/inability to say no	A legalistic desire to please God through religious deeds; self-righteous attempt to prove that others' faith isn't as strong as yours.
You notice profane thoughts and you share coarse jokes after spending time with friends at work.	A licentious spirit because you feel that God's standards are too strict and everyone talks like that at work.
At every small group, Bible study, or conversation you lament your life and talk about how horrible you are.	A self-centered heart that thrives on pity from others; A discontented heart with God because your life isn't what you want it to be.
You refuse to forgive a family member who sinned grievously against your spouse even though they confessed, repented, and have been reconciled to your spouse.	An unforgiving heart that prizes the grace of God for your sin but for the sin of others; a self-righteous heart that says, "I'd never do something like that and seek reconciliation. How dare they even try that!"
You find your taste getting more expensive and crave expensive hobbies and products that you notice others are using.	A worldly heart that is being lured and enticed by the cares of this world; a discontented heart that wishes God blessed your spouse with a better job.

Small group discussion: *When have you focused on the fruit rather than root of sin? Why is it dangerous to neglect the root?*

APPLYING THE MEDICINE OF THE GOSPEL



Ways we can apply the Gospel to our common sins and sin patterns:

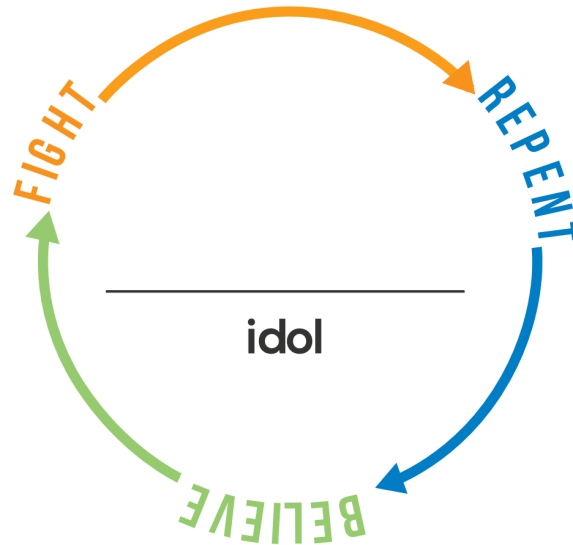
REPENT - BELIEVE - FIGHT

A Spirit-Powered, Gospel-Driven, Faith-Fueled Approach to Fight Sin



Step 3 - FIGHT
As I turn from my sin and believe the promises of God there will be specific steps I will need to take in order to walk by faith in obedience and remember the promises of God. Genuine believing the Gospel will move me to take practical steps to fight.

- How is the Holy Spirit moving me towards love and good deeds?
- How am I called to obey in this situation? How can I prevent or flee from this temptation?
- How can I utilize the tools of the Holy Spirit? (*God's Word, God's people, prayer*)



Step 2 - BELIEVE
I move from repent to believe because seeing my sin won't free me or create new desires but experiencing Jesus through His promises will. The only way to destroy the power of the idol that fuels my sin is to taste and see that Jesus is better.

- What did Jesus do for me regarding this sin?
- How does Jesus give me so much more of the very things I am looking for elsewhere?
- What specific promises from God's Word do I need to believe to empower transformation?

Step 1 - REPENT
As I sin against the Lord I must repent. At the heart of this repentance is recognizing what really drove my rebellion. I must see the sin beneath the sin. I must also see the sin as God sees it. I must be broken over how I have offended the Father and grieved the Holy Spirit.

- What am I really seeking with this sin?
- What is the sin beneath the sin, the root idol? (*power, control, approval, comfort*)
- How is this offensive to my King & Father? How have I grieved the Holy Spirit?

ACCOUNTABILITY, FRIENDSHIPS, AND DISCIPLESHIP

Accountability -

Friendships -

Discipleship -

DAILY DEVOTIONAL AND REFLECTION TIME

As we read, study, pray, and meditate, we grow in our understanding of God's Word and His Gospel message. As we encounter God in His Word, we learn more of His holiness and more of our unrighteousness. As we see His goodness and glory more clearly, we see our sin more clearly.

Improve your devotional time by adding in time for solitude and reflection. Rather than rushing through a quick reading or doing a deep, academic study, consider taking some time to reflect on what you're reading. Stop and ponder what the Word is revealing to you. Think about your reading throughout the day, and wrestle with implications the Word and Gospel have on your life that very day.

Check-in on your heart daily.

- How did I struggle to walk in obedience to God and His commands today? How did I fail to apply the Gospel as my medication when I realized my sin?
- How did Christ's grace and love comfort me today? If I didn't, what did I run to instead?
- How did I grow in my love for God and the people in my life today? Where do I need the Spirit to work in my heart to help me love better?
- Was my soul delighted in God today? If so, what was so satisfying about Him? If not, what did I run to for my satisfaction instead?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: Using a current sin struggle or pattern of sin in your life, use **repent, believe, fight** to help conquer that sin. If you have an accountability partner, consider sharing your answers with them.

Repent: I must confess my rebellion against God and see the sin below the sin. I need to realize that I have ultimately offended the Father, grieved the Spirit, and betrayed the Savior who shed His blood for me.

Q: What am I really seeking with this sin?

Q: What is the sin beneath the sin?

Q: How is this offensive to my King and Father? How have I grieved the Spirit? How have I betrayed the Son who died on the cross to pay for my sins?

Believe: After repenting, I need to look to Christ and believe God's promises for me.

Q: What did Jesus do for me regarding this sin?

Q: How does Jesus give me more of what I'm looking for elsewhere?

Q: What specific promises from God's Word do I need to believe to empower transformation?

Fight: Belief in God's love and promises will lead me to take specific, practical steps toward killing sin.

Q: How is the Holy Spirit moving me towards love and good deeds?

Q: How am I called to obey in this situation? How can I prevent or flee from this temptation?

Q: How can I utilize the tools of the Holy Spirit?