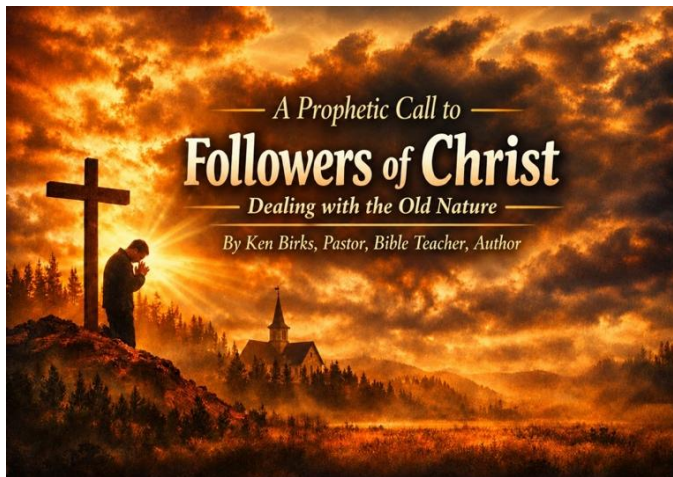


A Prophetic Call to Followers of Christ

Dealing with the Old Nature

By Ken Birks, Pastor, Bible Teacher, Author

Every believer in Jesus Christ is called to wage war against the old nature. We have become comfortable with the very things Christ died to free us from. The old nature does not die through neglect, softness, or coexistence—it must be crucified. This devotional calls all believers to personal holiness, reminding us that the battle begins in the mind. Before the old nature can be destroyed, the futile thinking that empowers it must be uprooted. The Scripture warns us with piercing clarity: *“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”*¹ Our thoughts shape our identity. Our mindset determines our spiritual trajectory. If our thinking is shaped by the worldly thinking, our lives will mirror the world. If Christ shapes our thinking, our lives will reflect Christ.



We confront immoral behavior by recognizing that as born-again followers of Christ, we have a personal responsibility to read and obey God’s Word. There will be no excuses at the judgment seat of Christ; whether the message of forsaking the old nature was fully taught to us or not, Scripture calls every believer to walk in holiness.

God’s Word is clear, and Paul lays out how to address immoral behavior with biblical clarity—not opinion or cultural trends, but with prophetic courage, consistent standards, and a commitment to redemption. To refuse these standards is to resist God Himself, who alone has the power to deliver His people from every bondage.

The Command to Put Off the Old Nature.

Paul identifies and begins the sins of the old nature with unmistakable clarity when he says, *“Put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, which is a form of idolatry.”*

Colossians 3:5-9 *“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Put off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language... Do not lie to one another.”*²

¹ Proverbs 23.7

² Colossians 3:5-9

If these things are to be put to death, they cannot be excused, tolerated, or rebranded as personal preference or cultural normalization. If we are to be true disciples of Jesus Christ—we must have the courage to walk in purity, model holiness, and confront worldly thinking with the mind of Christ. Anything less is surrender to cultural normalization.

The apostle Paul speaks to this issue of cultural normalization, when he writes to the church at Ephesus. He declares, *“So I tell you this, **and insist on it in the Lord**, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.”*³

In essence, Paul was saying: “You cannot walk in resurrection life while thinking with a fallen mind.” The old nature survives wherever futile thinking is tolerated. The new nature thrives only where the mind is renewed by truth.

1. Putting off Fornication.

Porneia Definition – Greek Lexicons — The original meaning of the Greek word *porneia* is "to prostitute" or "to sell." However by the time of the New Testament, *porneia* had a very broad meaning that included sexual behavior such as prostitution, extramarital sexual intercourse or adultery, paedophilia, promiscuity, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest, premarital sex and bestiality.⁴

As we take a look at all of the acts of the old nature, Paul begins with the issue of fornication. Scripture has a very specific and clear meaning when it comes to the issue of fornication. Fornication is any sexual activity outside the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. The Greek word Paul uses is *porneia* — a broad term that covers all sexual behavior that violates God’s design for holiness, purity, and covenant faithfulness. It includes premarital sex, adultery, prostitution, pornography, sexual touching or behavior intended to arouse outside marriage, and cohabitation that includes sexual intimacy. *Porneia* is sexual activity divorced from covenant, holiness, and God’s design.

Why Scripture Treats Fornication So Seriously

Fornication violates God’s creation design — Sex is covenantal — created to seal and express lifelong union. Outside of the covenant union between husband and wife, sex becomes self-centered rather than God-centered.

³ Ephesians 4:18

⁴ never thirsty.org

It unites bodies without uniting lives — Paul says sexual sin is unique because it joins two people physically and spiritually — *1 Corinthians 6:16*.

It corrupts the temple of the Holy Spirit — Sexual sin is not just physical — it is spiritual defilement — *1 Corinthians 6:18–20*.

2. Putting off Uncleaness

Uncleaness in Scripture refers to any form of moral, sexual, or spiritual impurity that corrupts the heart, the mind, or the body. The Greek word Paul uses *akatharsia*, meaning: Impurity of thought, desire, imagination, or action that makes a person unfit for holy fellowship with God. It is broader than fornication. Fornication is the act. Uncleaness is the condition of impurity that leads to the act.⁵

Uncleaness is the soil in which fornication grows and includes the following:

- **Impure thoughts** — lustful imagination, fantasizing, mental impurity.
- **Impure desires** — cravings that pull the heart away from holiness.
- **Impure speech** — suggestive talk, coarse joking, flirtation, swearing, and cursing.
- **Impure actions** — anything sexually charged that is not intercourse.
- **Impure media consumption** — **pornography, sensual entertainment with erotic content.**
- **Impure relational behavior** — touching, closeness, or intimacy that stirs sexual desire outside marriage,

Paul commands believers to “put to death” uncleaness because it corrupts the heart before any outward act occurs. It destroys spiritual sensitivity, opens the door to deeper sexual sin, defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit, and makes holiness feel unnatural while making sin feel normal. Uncleaness is especially dangerous because it is invisible and often respectable—it can exist in a believer’s life without anyone noticing. Biblically, uncleaness is any inward or outward impurity—sexual, moral, or spiritual—that pollutes the heart, distorts desire, and prepares the soul for sin. It is a condition of impurity that must be put to death so holiness can thrive.

3. Putting off Passion

Paul gives a clear and precise definition of passion and evil desires in Colossians 3:5 and Ephesians, showing why they are spiritually dangerous. Passion refers to inflamed, uncontrolled bodily impulses—desire that has moved from temptation into internal combustion.⁶ It is not normal emotion but impulses that overpower self-control, stirring sexual arousal outside marriage, emotional surges that override the Spirit, bodily cravings

⁵ Biblehub.com

⁶ Biblehub.com

demanding satisfaction, and sensual stimulation that awakens lust. Passion is dangerous because it overpowers reason, silences the Spirit's warnings, pushes the body toward sinful action, and makes temptation feel urgent and justified. It becomes the bridge between inward desire and outward sin.

4. Putting off Evil Desires

Evil desires are internal cravings, imaginations, fantasies, or longings that pull the heart toward sin and away from holiness. Evil desires are inward cravings for anything God forbids.⁷ They are the seedbed of outward sin. Evil desires include lustful imagination, fantasies, cravings, covetous longings, emotional appetites for forbidden things, and internal attraction to what God calls unclean.

These desires may be quiet, hidden, or unexpressed, but they are spiritually dangerous and lethal, because they shape the heart, corrupt the imagination, prepare the soul for sin, make holiness feel unnatural, make impurity feel normal, and erode spiritual sensitivity. Evil desires are the seed; passion is the heat; fornication is the fruit.

Evil desires must be put to death because they destroy purity, pollute the imagination, enslave the body, grieve the Holy Spirit, erode spiritual authority, break fellowship with God, and open doors to deeper bondage. Passion and evil desires are not "small sins." They are root sins — the ones that produce everything else.

5. Putting off Covetousness

Biblically, it is not merely wanting something; it is wanting *another's* portion in a way that dethrones God's sufficiency and elevates desire into idolatry. Covetousness is not simply noticing or admiring something. It is a restless, possessive craving that says, "*I must have that, even though God has not given it to me.*"⁸

Covetousness is spiritually dangerous because it quietly erodes a believer's walk with God. It destroys contentment and gratitude, breeding dissatisfaction with God's provision and blinding the heart to His goodness. When left unchecked, desire gives birth to sin and leads to destructive behaviors such as theft, envy, adultery, and even murder. Covetousness also becomes idolatry, causing the heart to worship what it craves rather than God, who provides all things. It corrodes relationships by turning others' blessings into resentment and fueling jealousy and division. Ultimately, covetousness deceives the heart about life's true meaning, insisting that fulfillment comes from acquiring more. In this way, it becomes a subtle but powerful enemy of spiritual health, distorting affections, relationships, and the believer's understanding of real life in God.

⁸ Biblehub.com

Covetousness is not managed; it is put to death, as Colossians 3:5 commands. This begins with cultivating Spirit-empowered contentment, following Paul's example of learning to be content in every circumstance. Trusting God's presence and provision also weakens covetousness, for His promise to never leave or forsake us frees the heart from grasping after what He has not given. Intentional gratitude shifts focus from what is lacking to what God has provided, while early confession brings hidden desires into the light where prayer and accountability break their power.

6. Putting off Anger, Wrath, and Malice

Paul commands believers to put away anger, wrath, and malice because these sins progressively corrupt the heart and destroy the life of the Spirit within. Anger is the slow, internal hostility that smolders beneath the surface, reshaping attitudes and poisoning relationships. Wrath is anger ignited—explosive outbursts, heated reactions, and verbal eruptions that wound others and contradict Christ's gentleness. Malice is anger matured into evil intent, the desire to harm, injure, or see someone suffer. Together they form a destructive chain: anger as the root, wrath as the expression, and malice as the intent. Left alive, they silence the Spirit's warnings, distort perception, fracture unity, and turn the believer's heart away from Christlike love. This is why Paul insists they must be put to death—not managed, excused, or minimized—so that holiness, peace, and the new nature can flourish in the life of every believer.

7. Putting Away Blasphemy

Blasphemy in Scripture refers to **speaking, acting, or thinking in ways that dishonor, insult, or degrade the character, name, or works of God**. It is any expression—verbal, internal, or behavioral—that treats what is holy as common, what is sacred as trivial, or what is divine as contemptible. In the New Testament, the word *blasphēmia* describes speech that slanders God, attributes evil to Him, mocks His truth, or credits His works to Satan. It also includes degrading or malicious speech toward the people of God, since they bear His image and represent His name. Blasphemy is destructive because it attacks the very nature of God, hardens the heart against the fear of the Lord, and opens the door to deeper rebellion. It sears the conscience, dulls spiritual sensitivity, and normalizes irreverence. When God's holiness is treated lightly, sin becomes casual, truth becomes negotiable, and repentance becomes rare. Blasphemy erodes the foundation of worship, undermines reverence, and ultimately leads the soul away from the only One who can save, cleanse, and transform.

8. Putting Away Filthy Language

Filthy language in Scripture refers to **speech that is morally impure, degrading, corrupt, or unwholesome**—words that defile the speaker, dishonor God, and tear down others.

The Greek term Paul uses in Colossians 3:8, *aischrologia*, describes speech that is shameful, obscene, coarse, or polluted. It includes profanity, vulgar joking, crude humor, sexually suggestive comments, and any form of speech that stirs impurity or undermines holiness. Filthy language is destructive because it normalizes sin, dulls spiritual sensitivity, and trains the heart to treat what is holy as common. It corrupts the atmosphere of a believer's life, influences others toward impurity, and contradicts the new nature Christ has given. Scripture teaches that our words reveal the condition of our hearts, and filthy language exposes a heart still influenced by the old nature. For this reason, Christians are commanded to put such speech away, allowing their words to reflect purity, reverence, and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

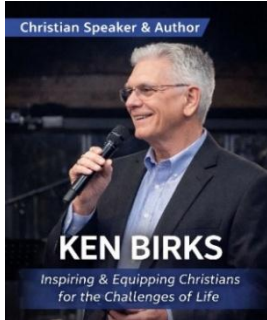
9. Putting Away Lying

Lying in Scripture is **any form of falsehood, deception, distortion, or misrepresentation of truth**—whether spoken, implied, or lived out. The biblical word *pseudos* refers to intentional deceit, dishonest speech, false impressions, hypocrisy, and anything that hides reality or manipulates perception. Lying is not limited to spoken words; it includes exaggeration, half-truths, misleading silence, false appearances, and any attempt to create a false reality. Scripture teaches that lying is destructive because it aligns the believer with the nature of Satan, “the father of lies,” rather than with Christ, who is the Truth. It corrupts the heart, sears the conscience, destroys trust, fractures relationships, and undermines the Church's integrity. Lying also weakens spiritual authority, grieves the Holy Spirit, and opens the door to deeper sins because deception always requires more deception to survive. For Christians—who are called to reflect the character of Christ—lying is spiritually toxic, incompatible with the new nature, and must be put away so that truth, purity, and holiness can flourish.

In conclusion, putting off the old nature is not a one-time event but a daily surrender. As we choose to walk in the Spirit, cultivate purity, and reject worldly thinking, holiness becomes natural and sin becomes foreign. This is the life God intends—clean, Spirit-filled, transformed, and marked by the beauty of Christ's character. The believer who puts off the old nature discovers freedom, clarity, and joy that the world can never offer. The new nature rises wherever the old nature is put to death.⁹

⁹ All definitions from above were condensed from Biblehub.com

About Ken Birks



Ken Birks has walked with God through seasons of quiet wonder, deep refining, and unexpected grace — journeys that have shaped both his faith and voice. From early moments of sensing God’s nearness to years of learning to listen more closely, Ken has discovered that the Lord often speaks in whispers, rhythms, and poetic impressions.

Out of those sacred encounters came a desire to write — not to impress, but to invite. To invite others into the same stillness, the same clarity, the same holy encouragement that has carried them through life’s valleys and mountaintops. His devotional poetry and other writings flow from a heart that has wrestled, worshiped, and been transformed by God’s presence.

Today, Ken writes to help fellow believers pause, breathe, and rediscover the treasures God longs to place within them. Ken’s hope is simple: that every reader will feel the Father’s nearness, hear His voice more clearly, and walk with renewed courage into the calling He has lovingly prepared.

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