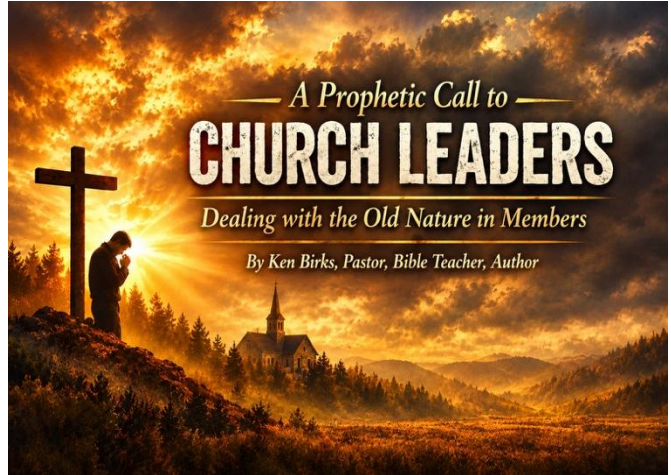


A Prophetic Call to Church Leaders

Dealing with the Old Nature in Members

By Ken Birks, Pastor, Bible Teacher, Author

In today's Christianity, we are facing a crisis far deeper than declining attendance or shifting cultural trends. We are witnessing a moral drift—a quiet, subtle erosion of purity, conviction, and holiness within the very house of God. Much of the Church has allowed the world to disciple us more effectively than we disciple the world. Culture has become our compass, and in many ways, the Church has surrendered its spiritual authority by adopting its standards. We see it in the way we speak, the way we dress, the way we entertain ourselves, and the way we justify lifestyles that once grieved our conscience.



The old nature has not merely lingered—it has been normalized. The American Church as a whole has become comfortable with the very things Christ died to free us from. This is the futility of worldly thinking, and until we confront it honestly, we cannot begin the work of destroying the old nature.

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.

This devotional calls us to a prophetic awakening—to recognize that the battle for holiness begins in the mind. Before the old nature can be crucified, the futile thinking that empowers it must be exposed and uprooted. Only then can the new nature rise in purity, strength, and truth. The apostle Paul speaks to this issue 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.”*²

What Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus is not merely ancient counsel—it is a prophetic mirror held up to the modern Church. His words expose a mindset that has infiltrated,

¹ Proverbs 23:7

² Ephesians 4:18

seduced, and weakened the very Church Jesus planted with His own blood, His own suffering, and resurrection power. The seed Christ sowed was holy, pure, and undefiled—yet much of today’s Church has allowed a foreign seed to take root.

Paul’s warning should thunder in our hearts as a strong pastoral rebuke to the so-called Church of our generation. He did not whisper. He did not suggest. **He insisted**—with apostolic authority and divine urgency—that God’s people repent from the futility of their thinking.

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.

This is not a gentle nudge; it is a prophetic summons. The Church must awaken, confront the seduction of worldly thinking, and return to the purity of Christ’s mind. Anything less is spiritual compromise.

A Call to Reclaim the Standards of Holiness

What kind of standards are we allowing in our local churches? This is where repentance begins—not with emotion, not with a moment at the altar, but with a sober examination of what we have permitted, tolerated, and normalized in the house of God. What kind of purity and holiness are we modeling for new believers? And more importantly, where are we getting those standards from?

Paul exhorted Timothy to be an example of believers *in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*³ *In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.*⁴

If we expect believers to put off the old nature, then leaders and those in visible positions must model what it looks like to lay aside the flesh and walk in the new nature. Whether we acknowledge it or not, osmosis shapes every church—new believers absorb the atmosphere we create. They are disciplined, intentionally or not, by the culture we allow. If purity is rarely mentioned, if holiness is treated as optional, or if standards are softened to avoid losing members, we are no longer forming people into Christlikeness but into worldliness with Christian language.

To grasp what Scripture calls the old nature, we must honestly examine whether we have truly separated from it. These are the works of the flesh Paul warned against when he insisted that believers *“must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their*

³ 1 Timothy 4:12

⁴ 1 Timothy 2:9

thinking.” He commands us to put these things to death—meaning they cannot be tolerated, excused, or allowed to linger in the life of the Church.

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. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds. ”*

Fornication in Scripture has a clear and specific meaning: any sexual activity outside the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. Paul uses the Greek word *porneia*, a broad term covering all sexual behavior that violates God’s design for holiness, purity, and covenant faithfulness. When purity standards are avoided out of fear—fear of offense, backlash, or empty seats—the Church is no longer led by the Spirit but seduced by worldly standards. And a worldly church cannot confront a worldly culture; a compromised church cannot call a compromised generation to repentance. The Church cannot transform what it resembles, rebuke what it imitates, or rescue what it envies. Paul warned the Romans not to copy the world’s behavior and customs but to be transformed by renewed thinking. This is the hour for courageous repentance—beginning with our standards, our purity, our holiness, and our willingness to teach what God commands rather than what culture approves.

Confronting Immoral Behavior in the Church — A Prophetic Mandate

The Church carries a sacred mandate to confront every expression of the old nature—beginning with fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desires, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, and lying. Scripture is unambiguous: these sins must be put to death, not tolerated, excused, or softened. God’s word warns that fornication and uncleanness corrupt the temple of the Holy Spirit and violate God’s covenant design, while passion and evil desires operate as root sins that “shape the heart, corrupt the imagination, prepare the soul for sin, and make holiness feel unnatural.” When the Church avoids confronting these sins out of fear—fear of offense, backlash, or losing members—it becomes “seduced by worldly standards” and loses its prophetic authority. The Church cannot disciple believers into holiness while allowing impurity, sensuality, and worldly thinking to shape its culture.

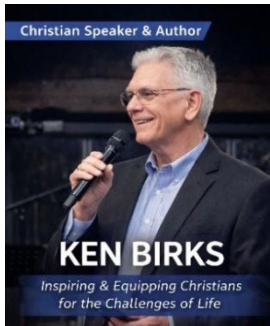
For this reason, the Church must reclaim biblical courage, uphold clear standards of purity, and confront every form of sin with pastoral love and prophetic clarity. Covetousness must be exposed as idolatry; anger, wrath, and malice must be addressed as corrosive forces that fracture unity; blasphemy and filthy language must be corrected because they normalize irreverence; and lying must be confronted because it aligns

believers with “*the father of lies*” rather than Christ. These issues cannot remain hidden or respectable within the congregation. Refusing to confront immorality is not grace but negligence, allowing the old nature to disciple God’s people. The Church must therefore model holiness, teach truth without compromise, and create an atmosphere where the new nature can thrive and the old nature is decisively put to death.

The Church cannot afford to be vague or passive when confronting immoral behavior. Scripture never permits leaders to look the other way—holiness is essential, purity is non-negotiable, and confronting sin is an act of pastoral love and spiritual protection. When the Church mirrors the world and adopts its standards, she loses her prophetic voice, becoming an echo instead of a trumpet, a mirror instead of a lamp. Immorality thrives wherever silence and compromise reign, but the Church Jesus planted was meant to be a sanctuary for transformation, not a refuge for sin. Refusing to confront immorality is not grace but negligence, allowing the old nature to disciple God’s people. Paul warned the Ephesians to reject futile worldly thinking because immorality begins in the mind long before it appears in behavior. When we embrace worldly thinking, worldly behavior follows; once immorality becomes normalized, repentance grows rare, conviction dulls, and holiness becomes foreign.

In conclusion, the Church cannot transform what she resembles, rebuke what she imitates, or rescue what she envies. This is the hour for courageous leadership—leaders who refuse compromise, who confront worldly thinking, and who model holiness with clarity and conviction. When the Church deals faithfully with the old nature, she becomes once again a lamp in the darkness, a trumpet of truth, and a sanctuary where the new nature can flourish. Holiness must begin in the pulpit before it can flourish in the pew.

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.

For other Devotional Articles Like this by Ken Birks
Click the Image Below

