

The Radical Life: Four Steps to Spiritual Freedom That Lasts

SERMON NOTES for 03/29/2026



John Owens used to say that a pastor has two problems:

Persuading unbelievers that they **are** under the dominion of Sin.

Persuading believers that they **are not** under the dominion of Sin.

Review Romans 6:11-14

We saw the first 4 commands in Romans... *“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”* (Romans 6:11–14, LSB)

When God saves someone, that person is new! *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

This is a fact: if you are christian, you are not the same old person.

So, how can you practically break free from the cycle of sin?

Are you sick of your sin, Christian?

These "Four Radical A's" (biblical counseling) provide a framework for actively fighting sin & pursuing holiness. These principles focus on aggressively removing sinful influences, submitting to community, applying biblical truth, and worshipping God to transform hearts.

I. Radical **AMPUTATION**: Cutting the Cord

Amputation isn't about legalism; it's about spiritual survival.

The manner of being free from habitual sin is to radically amputate every avenue through which it enters, and to be radical in cutting it off at the source.

The Concept: Identifying the "entry points" of sin.

““But if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. “And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.” (Matthew 5:29–30, LSB)

Jesus is teaching the need to be radical in cutting out those avenues through which sin enters.

In other words, He is saying to make it so that it is practically impossible to get to your sin or to gratify your flesh in the same way you've been doing.

Action Step: Identify one specific app, relationship, or habit to "amputate" this week.

If you want to be free consider every avenue through which you have fallen, and set out to make it so that you have zero access to it in the future.

II. Radical ACCOUNTABILITY: Opening the Blinds

The Concept: Moving from privacy to transparency.

Accountability isn't just "getting caught"; it's being known intimately by someone.

We who have indulged in feeding the flesh through habitual sin have made sure that our lives are private so that nobody will discover our sin, and we have been accountable to no one.

Now, when we seek to be free, we need to learn how to invite accountability into our lives, as daily encouragement is an antidote to the power of sin:

“But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “TODAY,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:13, LSB)

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” (James 5:16, LSB)

“Brothers, even if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each of you looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:1–2, LSB)

Discussion Points:

Be a good "friend" and offer accountability & "biblical counseling."

"Where did your mind wander today?" vs. "How are you?").

Action Step: Choose one person to share a specific struggle with by Tuesday.

Note: Those who do not love the Lord will not help us serve the Lord.

III. Radical APPROPRIATION: Putting on the New

The Concept: You can't just stop a bad habit; you must replace it. This is "appropriating" the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word.

“to lay aside, in reference to your former conduct, the old man, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” (Ephesians 4:22–24, LSB)

We must learn to replace this previous sinful energy in pursuing our idolatry with pursuing the Lord

“But you, O man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, gentleness.” (1 Timothy 6:11, LSB)

Practical tools: Scripture memory, prayer prompts, and "replacement" behaviors.

Action Step: Find one "Replacement Verse" for your primary struggle.

IV. Radical ADORATION: The Expulsive Power of a New Affection

Radical Accountability, Amputation and Appropriation are in and of themselves of little lasting value without... 'Radical Adoration'!

- **The Problem:** The heart has a natural attachment to the world and its pleasures.
- **The Inefficacy of Suppression:** Simply trying to stop loving the world or showing its worthlessness is ineffective; it leaves a "cheerless vacancy".

"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15, LSB)

Chalmers poses for himself the question:

How shall the human heart be freed from its *love* for the world?

This "love" is not a duty one performs. It is a delight one prefers.

It is an **affection** before it is a **commitment**.

- **The Expulsive Power:** A new, superior love (the Gospel/God) must enter the heart, which naturally expels or displaces the old love. The only way to fall out of love with sin is to fall deeper in love with Jesus. (Thomas Chalmers, "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection".)

"Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart fail, But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever." (Psalm 73:25–26, LSB)

- **Our Work:** The focus should not be on directly attacking sin, but on setting forth the "worth and excellence" of God, making him a more alluring object of affection.

Willpower fails where Worship succeeds!

"More than that, I count all things to be loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ" (Phil. 3:8)

Action Step: Spend 15 minutes each morning this week simply thanking God for who He is, not asking for anything