


# A PRELUDE TO *BIBLICAL* EVANGELISM



A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots growing over stone ruins. The tree's trunk is massive and textured, with roots spreading out across the ground and over the stone structures. The background shows more stone ruins and lush green foliage. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment.

THE FRUIT OF  
THE RIGHTEOUS IS A  
TREE OF LIFE,  
AND HE WHO IS WISE  
WINS SOULS.

PROVERBS 11:30 NASB



**PRINCIPLES  
FOR  
BIBLICAL  
*EVANGELISM*  
FOUND IN  
JOHN 4, “THE  
WOMAN AT  
THE WELL.”**

TAKE

- TAKE THE INITIATIVE! JN. 4:6-9

OFFER

- OFFER GOD’S MERCY! JN. 4:10-14

IDENTIFY

- IDENTIFY SPIRITUAL NEEDS! JN. 4:9-10

CONFRONT

- CONFRONT SIN JN! 4:16-18

REJECT

- REJECT FALSE WORSHIP! JN. 4:19-24

REVEAL

- REVEAL CHRIST! JN. 4:25-26



# KILL OR BE KILLED


- If someone were to ask you, “*What’s the most dangerous spiritual responsibility to neglect?*” You might think of Scripture reading, prayer, evangelism, listening to preaching, or attending corporate worship. And it’s not that you’d be wrong . . . God commands all believers to pursue those things. ***THEY’RE NON-NEGOTIABLE.***
- But there’s another spiritual responsibility we often overlook. It’s an intimate, unpleasant, and exhausting duty called—***killing sin***. After all, didn’t Christ deliver a crushing blow to sin when He rose from the dead? Wasn’t it *His* job to kill sin at Calvary? Well, yes, and that was the fundamental beginning to His judgment against sin.

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- Christ removed the **PENALTY** of our **sin** on the cross. As Christians, you and I no longer stand accused under the righteous requirements of the law (**Rom. 8:4**). There's no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (**Rom. 8:1**). The work of Christ also removed sin's **POWER** over believers. Having been crucified with Christ, we're no longer enslaved to sin's grip. Christ rendered it powerless when He rose from the dead (**Rom. 6:14, 22**). So, if Christ removed sin's **penalty** and **power**,

**WHAT'S LEFT TO KILL?**

- Too few Christians are asking that question today, and too few pastors are bringing it to their attention. That wasn't true of Puritan pastor **JOHN OWEN**. He dealt comprehensively with the question, teaching Christians from Scripture how to kill remaining sin. In one of his classic works, ***The Mortification of Sin***, there's a famous quote from Owen: ***"BE KILLING SIN, OR SIN WILL BE KILLING YOU."*** That's right—kill or be killed. Take your pick.
- Thankfully, other faithful pastors followed in **OWEN'S** footsteps to expound on the Bible's teaching on ***the believer's relationship to indwelling sin***. They understood the reality of remaining sin, took its threat seriously, and labored to help the body of Christ adopt biblical strategies for killing it. We owe the Lord a deep debt of gratitude for them for helping us with such practical issues in our sanctification.

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- Here's a powerful analogy of **comparing the *remaining sin in the life of a believer*** with ***KING AGAG***, the wicked ruler of the ***Amalekites*** in the Old Testament. **(1 Sam. 15:1-35)**
  - As the story goes, God sent ***SAMUEL*** to rebuke ***KING SAUL*** because he allowed Agag to live in disobedience to His command to annihilate the Amalekites. Samuel announced the end of Saul's throne, and then turned to Agag to take care of a more gruesome business. ***SAMUEL HACKED AGAG TO PIECES WITH A SWORD. "But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal."*** (1 Sam. 15:33)
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- When **AGAG** comes to you cheerfully and says, "***Surely the bitterness of death is past,***" which is another way of saying, "***Well the war is over, you're saved, you're on your way, I'm defeated, don't worry about me.***" When **AGAG** and his **Amalekite** friends want to make friends with you and declare an end to hostilities, **THAT'S WHEN YOU GRAB YOUR SWORD AND HACK THEM TO PIECES.**



- As believers, ***indwelling sin*** continues to trouble us, but God calls us to treat that remaining sin like **SAMUEL** treated **AGAG**.

***KILL IT AND BE BRUTAL ABOUT IT!!!***





# OUR RELENTLESS **WAR** AGAINST **SIN**

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- Have you ever wondered, “**WHY DO I HAVE TO DEAL WITH SIN AT ALL?** If God hates sin, if true Christians hate sin, and we’re all in agreement, then why must it remain?”
- That’s not a bad question to ask. **WHY WOULD** a good God leave behind such a menacing enemy that ***corrupts your relationships, threatens your holiness, hinders your worship, and causes so much anguish in your life?***
- The children of Israel probably entertained the same thoughts about their pagan neighbors—the Gentile nations who continually harassed them.

- Here's the point. God could have wiped out all traces of sin—effortlessly, just like he could have permanently wiped out the nations surrounding Israel. But He didn't do that for them, and He hasn't done it for us either—not yet.
- Full deliverance from **SIN'S PRESENCE** will come when we receive our **GLORIFIED BODIES**. Then sin will no longer harass us. What a day that will be! But until then, God calls us to a *relentless war against sin*—a war with a divine purpose. **BUT...WHAT ARE THOSE PURPOSES?**
- **FIRST OF ALL**, we must remember that God does whatever He pleases (**Psa. 115:3**). He works all things according to the counsel of His own will (**Eph. 1:11**). We don't know the full extent of His sovereign will, and much of that remains secret (**Deut. 29:29**). **BUT WE DO KNOW THIS: IN HIS WISDOM, GOD HAS CHOSEN NOT TO REMOVE FULLY THE PRESENCE OF SIN FROM HIS REDEEMED.**

- A believer's struggle with **INDWELLING SIN** somehow fits into God's overarching purpose to glorify Himself and conform believers into the image of His Son. **PAUL** says:

***“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Rom. 8:28-29)***

- That's the most generic explanation you'll find in Scripture for **THE PRESENCE OF EVIL IN THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE EVIL THAT AFFLICTS BELIEVERS**. That said, I believe we can discern some reasons why God allows Christians to struggle with sins, some **DIVINE PURPOSES** for the **WAR**. Consider these possibilities:

# #1 TO MAKE US **HUMBLE AND DEPENDENT ON GOD**

- Whether you fail or succeed, have you noticed how your struggle against *indwelling sin* reveals your *weakness* and *magnifies God's strength*?  
Whatever the outcome of any particular battle, you can give thanks to God that He allows you to see yourself for what you really are—weak, prone to sin, and utterly dependent. At the same time, you can praise Him for who He proves to be—***OUR ALL-SUFFICIENT SAVIOR AND FRIEND.***
- Consider ***PETER***, who on the night of the Lord's betrayal boasted of his loyalty to Christ. Hours later he watched his self-confidence crumble as he denied Christ three times with oaths. Consider the failures, but resulting victory of many such men, and how they produced *humble, courageous, Spirit-led* servants of God.

## #2 TO CULTIVATE THANKFULNESS

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- Here's an instructive exercise. **REFLECT** on some recent occasions you found to **express thanks to God**. Did any of those relate to your or another believer's ongoing struggle with sin?
- MAYBE YOU THANKED GOD FOR GRANTING STRENGTH TO FACE TEMPTATION.
- FOR DELIVERING YOU FROM A BESETTING SIN.
- FOR FORGIVING YOU FOR STUMBLING IN A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS.
- FOR FORGIVING YOU FOR FAILING TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH A LOST FRIEND/FAMILY MEMBER.



## #3 TO PROMOTE COMPASSION


- You can relate to the lost, not only by remembering your former life of enslavement to sin (**Eph. 2:1-3**), but also through *experiencing present failures*. When you face temptation, whether you resist and escape unscathed, or succumb through weakness, **IT SHOULD PROMOTE COMPASSION TOWARD OTHERS.**

## #4 TO KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON THE GOSPEL

- What causes you to survey the cross each day and marvel at the power of God's grace? Is it not the *sin* that clings so closely, the sin you find yourself confessing and forsaking each day?
- ***GOD WANTS TO KEEP THE CROSS FRESH IN OUR MINDS.*** He wants the gospel to occupy our thoughts. Think about it. We can hardly make it through a worship service without a wicked thought assaulting our minds. Even in the name of fellowship we often commit some of the ghastliest sins with *our tongue*. ***THE PRESENCE OF SIN AND OUR ONGOING STRUGGLE KEEP US FOCUSED ON THE BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL.***

## #5 TO MAKE YOU LONG FOR HEAVEN

- ***THIS WORLD IS NOT OUR HOME, AND THIS BODY IS NOT FIT FOR ETERNITY.*** When **PAUL** lamented his unredeemed flesh (**Rom. 7:24**), he was expressing a longing to be completely free from ***the presence of sin.***
- He talked about that eagerness again and again throughout the New Testament. In (**Phil. 1:23**), he said departing to be with Christ would be much better than remaining in his flesh. In **chapter 3** he continued that thought: ***“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory.”***

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- **PAUL** longed for heaven because he grew weary of his struggle against sin. The seasons of victory he enjoyed on earth whetted his appetite for final, permanent victory in heaven.
  - Do you share Paul's longing to escape the flesh? Do you yearn for the Holy City, untouched by corruption?

**OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST *REMAINING SIN* HELPS POINT US TO HEAVEN, WHERE *TRUE REST AWAITS US*.**

