**Colossians 3:5-11**

I. We live in the “in between times” (3:1-4)

 A. We have died to an old life and have been raised to a new life in Christ

 B. Yet we still face the “already/not yet” nature of living as new people in a fallen world C. Paul calls us to a perspective: set your minds on your new life above (v. 2)

D. Paul calls us to a practice: put to death your old life (v. 5)

1. He mentions an old life of sexual sin (v. 5)

2. He mentions an old life of relational sin (v. 8)

II. Defining Sexual Immorality

 A. Sexual Purity

1. God invented sex and he celebrates it as the great gift that it is (see Song of Songs)

2. God designed sex to flourish in a particular context: a loving committed marriage between a man and a woman. In that context, sex is a very holistic experience (spiritual, relational, physical, emotional)

 B. Sexual Immorality

1. Sexual immorality is any sexual activity outside of God’s designed context (pre-marital sexual activity, extra marital sex, same-sex activity, pornography, self-stimulating sexual activity, etc.)

2. When sex is taken outside of God’s context, it actually becomes a smaller and smaller thing (today it is increasingly being reduced to personal physical satisfaction). “The magnificent, multidimensional marital sexuality of the Bible has been shrink-wrapped into a flat-sided, single-dimensioned, materialistic package.”

III. The pervasiveness and damage of sexual immorality

A. A study of the millennial generation showed that 79% of men and 64% of women watch porn at least once a month

B. Pornography causes damage to person who engages in porn

1. A recent study of teenagers found a significant relationship between frequent porn use and feelings of loneliness and major depression

2. In Christian men, porn use comes with feelings of isolation, shame, and guilt

C. Pornography causes damage to others

1. Porn consumption drives the porn industry which puts the women on the screen in unjust and inhumane occupations

2. Porn consumption has negative impacts on marriages, as it puts strange and unrealistic sexual expectations on spouses

IV. Paul’s call for us

A. He reminds us of a Biblical perspective

1. He points us forward in time and reminds us that God’s wrath is coming for precisely these kinds of sins (v. 6)

2. He points us back in time and reminds us that these kinds of sins are part of an old life that no longer belongs to us (v. 7)

B. He calls us to “put to death” these sins (v. 5)

1. This means we are to take ruthless, decisive action against sexual sin. We are not to feed it or nurture it, but to kill it.

2. Consider the man with the pet lizard on his shoulder from C.S. Lewis’ “The Great Divorce”

3. Paul is not calling us to perfection, but he is calling us to declare war on our sexual sin, to fight the good fight against it.

V. What does it look like to fight the good fight in the area of sexual temptation?

A. We have to know what to do when we fail

1. Every time we fail, we must bring that into the light of God’s presence through confession, so that we can experience his grace and mercy in a fresh way.

2. “Jesus is not against you because of your sin, he is with you against your sin.”

3. See Ephesians 5:8-11 and Colossians 2:13-14

B. We have to invite other people into this journey

1. While it feels vulnerable to confess this to another person, walking through this in community frees us from the power of a secret life and gives us encouragement and strength for the journey

2. Find a trusted friend to do this with

C. Prayerfully come up with a strategy for declaring war on this sin

1. “Train yourselves in godliness.” As in physical health, freedom in our spiritual lives comes through intentional and sustained discipline.

 2. What would those disciplines and practices be for you?

-Accountability software/filters on our computers and phones

-Strategies for what to do when we see someone who causes temptation

-Places we simply have to avoid

-Shows we simply cannot watch

 -Bible verses we can memories that will help us in weak moments

**Discussion Question**

1. What was the “sex education” you received from your parents? Was sex a dirty, taboo thing? Was it talked about casually or flippantly? Was it the unspoken topic?

2. What did you think of the definition of sexual purity and sexual immorality given on Sunday? How does that intersect with your own thoughts on the subject? What questions does that raise for you?

3. Consider the comment made on Sunday: “Jesus is not against you because of your sin, he is with you against your sin.” How does that affect how you approach the sin in your life (sexual or otherwise)?

4. Consider Paul’s command to, “put to death.” On Sunday we talked about declaring war on sexual sin and developing a set of relationships, habits, and disciplines to guard ourselves. How did all of that strike you? As too drastic? As not drastic enough? As you consider your own life (in any area of your life), do you carry that perspective with you?