

# 'Urge to Sin' the Acquired Factor

by Richard Siple

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*The acquired factor of sin, or sinful habits, can be broken through repentance, replacing them with righteous ones, and regaining control through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 53:37

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:22, Ephesians 4:29

**Topics:** "Sin"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins with a prayer, asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance and presence. He shares a story about a boy in Alabama who was found guilty of stealing watermelons and asks the judge if he has ever stolen one. The preacher then emphasizes the power of the blood of Jesus to forgive and wipe out our sins. He also discusses the importance of putting off sinful habits and putting on love, as mentioned in Ephesians 4:27. The sermon concludes with a story about a dying man in a hospital who declines help, highlighting the temptation to yield to sin and the need for thorough repentance.

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## Transcript

The following recording is available from the Canadian Revival Fellowship, Box 584, Regina, Saskatchewan, in Canada. This message is entitled, The Acquired Factor. Pastor Dick Siple describes the development of sinful habits and God's prescription for breaking them.

This beautiful song is certainly the prayer of my heart tonight, and I'm sure it is your prayer. Fill me now. Romans chapter 7, I'm going to be reading verses 21 through 23 as the basic text for our message tonight.

Please have your Bibles ready as we'll be considering other passages. I'm sure you'll want to follow along in them. Let us bow for prayer.

Father, we pray now that the Holy Spirit will open our understanding that we might understand the scriptures. Lord, we pray also that our hearts may be deeply touched by the finger of God, that the Holy Spirit, about whom the ladies have been singing, may be a reality as he works in our lives. Lord, we in ourselves have no wisdom or strength.

We have no confidence in the flesh. The flesh profits us nothing. It is the Spirit that gives life, and we pray that he shall give life tonight.

In Jesus' name, amen. An Alabama boy, a true southern Dixie southern boy, was arraigned in juvenile court for stealing a number of watermelons. He was found guilty, and before passing sentence, the judge, trying to be serious, said, Is there anything you wish to say before I pass sentence? The boy thought for a minute and then said, Judge, have you ever stolen a watermelon? You'd have to understand Alabama to understand that question.

There was a painful silence, and finally the judge said brusquely, Case dismissed. The urge to sin. All of us experience this pressure to do wrong.

Where does this urge to sin come from, and how can we triumph over it? As we've been learning these nights, the urge to sin has three sources. The imposed factor, or temptation, the inherited factor, or the factor of self-preservation, and the acquired factor, the factor of sinful habits. We have already considered the first two in the last two Sunday nights.

Let me summarize them very briefly for those who may not have been here, but very briefly. The first source of the urge to sin, I did not say the source of sin, but the urge to sin that we all experience, is the imposed factor, and it has to do with our own personal desires and Satan. All of us have natural, human, God-given desires within us, all kinds of appetites and desires to be fulfilled.

God has given us legitimate and proper ways in which those desires are to be fulfilled. The great and primary urge to sin, as far as man was concerned, was Satan coming and tempting Eve to fulfill those desires in a way contrary to the will of God, or outside of those means provided by God for the fulfilling of her normal desires. And as Satan holds out the world to us and entices us, we are drawn by our own inward desires and by the enticement of Satan, and then, if we yield to that, we enter into the committing of sin.

Eve was our first example. Jesus is another example, though he did not sin, yet he was tempted on the same level. Eve was without a sinful nature and yet felt this urge and yielded to it.

Jesus was without a sinful nature and was tempted in exactly the same three ways that Eve was tempted, but resisted that temptation, praise his name. And he has forever let us see that it is possible to triumph in this area. The way to victory is to resist the devil and draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you, and he will bring the victory that we need.

The second source of the urge to sin is the inherited factor. We said briefly last Sunday night that all men inherit dying bodies. They come into this world with a body that is already dying before they are born.

They inherit that dying body from Adam when the sentence of death was pronounced. And as soon as Adam and Eve sinned, death began to take place in their bodies, and that death is passed on through the loins of Adam down to all men, and all men are born with dying bodies facing the ultimate sentence of death. Fear of death produces the bondage of self-preservation or self-ish-ness, and we all experience this basic essence of sin that we have inherited through the death principle self-ish-ness.

When you take and add that self-ish-ness to the enticements of Satan as he draws upon our natural desires, it creates a tremendous urge to sin. Victory over this particular aspect of the urge to sin comes through identification with Christ. In his death and resurrection, in his dying on the cross, we identify with him we are forgiven of our sins through his shed blood and we are set free from the self-life or the self-ish-ness principle, the principle of self-preservation.

We are delivered from that principle when we yield to death, the death on the cross of our Lord. And as that self is given up to death, we are set free from the fear and bondage of death and the urge to preserve self, and we can have victory and triumph over self-ish-ness through Jesus Christ and his work upon the cross of Calvary and through the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. Now we come to the third source of this urge to sin, which is our message for tonight.

This is the acquired factor or sinful habits. To begin this study tonight, look with me at Romans 7, verses 21 to 23. I find in a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me.

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members, underlying that in your mind, a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Now, first of all, I'd like to define three terms that are in this passage of scripture. The first one is the word law, and the word law is used in at least three different ways in this passage of scripture.

You have the law of God, which I take to be the revealed will of God, either through the scriptures or the law that's written in the heart, or however the law of God is revealed. That is a revealed law where God has said, this is what you are to do and not to do, and God has revealed his will. That's one kind of law.

You have the law of the mind, which is given here, which means certainly at least the bent or the turn of that inward man that has been redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ and has been born again of the Spirit. And so that inner man that he speaks of, there is within him a new law, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And that new law is a direction that his inner man takes as he begins to walk with God.

But there's another law, and that law is the law that is in his members. Now there are various ways to define the word law, but one way, and I want you to listen very carefully to this tonight because this is now at the heart of my message, and I'm getting to it very early in the message. And don't let that frighten you.

Listen to a definition of the word law. The uniform way in which a thing constantly happens is called a law. The uniform way in which a thing constantly, repeatedly happens is called a law.

This is always so in physics and in science. For instance, the law of gravity. Why do we call it a law? Did someone decree that the things that go up must come down? Did someone say and write it in a book or pass it in the legislature? Or was it decreed in the written law of God that things fall to the earth? No.

But the reason we talk about the law of gravity is that we're talking about something that always happens in the same way. And if I take this pencil tonight and I let go of it, what will it do? What will it do? You're right. Now, the reason that you knew it would fall is because that's the way it always happens.

And if I had let go of it and it had continued to float in the air, that would have been some kind of higher law brought into effect, and you probably all would have been frightened and left the building. But the reason you expected it to fall is because you are familiar with the law of gravity and you have learned through experience that that's the way that constantly happens. And it's called a law because it is the way something takes place.

Now, this particular law is the law that's in my members. And Paul says, there is a thing in the members of my being that makes things always happen in the same old sinful way. Anybody know what I'm talking about? Nobody knows.

I'm all alone. He's talking about the same old sinful way that certain things keep happening. A law in his members, the law of sin in his members.

Now, what are the members? Well, the members are the various parts of his being. For instance, my hands are two of my members. They're parts of me.

And I have certain habits with my hands. For instance, one time I took karate. So if you ever take a swing at me a certain way, I will probably do certain things with my hands.

So watch it. Not because I will think that fast, but I will probably react that fast through habit. All right? My hands, they're members.

I have eyes, they're members. I have a mouth that's one of my members, a tongue that's one of my members. Any of you have any trouble with that member? No.

I have a mind. I have an intellect. I think, and there are certain thought patterns that run through my mind.

That's one of my members, and my emotions are part of my members. I have all kinds of parts of me. I tickled at my wife's little niece.

Her mother had always bathed her and would say, now let's bathe your feet and let's bathe your legs and let's bathe your hands and your arms. And she'd go all over her, all these different parts. And finally she taught her to and she said, did you get a good bath? Did you do it right? Did you get everything? And she said, I washed all my things.

She meant all of her members, at least her physical members. And there are all these parts to our being. And Paul is talking about a law in his members, a law of sin in his members.

In fact, what he's really talking about is that there are certain ways that his members always do the same old thing. And some of you know what I'm talking about, because every time a certain circumstance arises in your home with your children, your tongue, much to your consternation, always does the same old thing. Huh? And your voice, and it reaches a certain pitch.

I better not get into that. There are all kinds of laws that have been developed in our members that react certain ways, laws of sin, the same old way that these members react. Then there is the inner man or the mind, and I take that to be the regenerated inner spirit of the man that has been born again.

And I believe with all my heart that Romans 7 is a picture of a man who has been born again, who has the law of God inwardly that is his delight, and he wants to please the Lord, but he's having a terrible battle. There is one law within him that says, follow Christ. And he says, amen, that's what I want to do, Lord.

But he finds in his members, in the parts of his being, another law of sin that constantly tricks him. And he's determined to handle life in a certain way, and automatically, almost before he knows it, he's doing it another way. A law of sin in his members.

Now, how did we get that way? Turn with me to Romans 6. Romans 6 and verse 12. The message that you're hearing tonight could be one of the most important things you have ever heard as a Christian. I hope you will get it very, very carefully.

Romans 6.12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, don't let it rule over you, that you should obey it in the lust thereof, that you should obey those desires. You see, here now we're right back to the first urge to sin, our desires and Satan's enticement. Paul says, don't obey it.

Don't give in to those desires, those lusts, those urges, as you're enticed by Satan to sin. Don't give in to those, don't obey those. Because if you do, something will happen.

In verse 13, neither yield ye your members. Oh, there's your members again. You see, when we sin, we not only sin from the heart, but we sin with our members.

That's right. We sin with our hands, or we sin with our tongue, or we sin with our eyes, right? Or we sin with our mind, our thoughts, different parts of our being. Not only do we sin with our inner will when we yield to the enticement of Satan and yield to our desires and obey those urges, but we sin with some member of our being, or members.

There may be a combination. Sometimes we sin with our ears when we listen to something that is ungodly that we ought not to listen to, but it appeals to our sense of humor. Is a sense of humor sin? I hope not.

If it is, I'm full of it. But there are some things we ought not to listen to that are very, very funny. Is that right? And there are some things we ought not to watch on television that are quite funny.

And there are some things we ought not to read that are very interesting and very fascinating and very well written. Oh, there's all kinds of sin that can be committed with our members. And whenever we sin, we do it with our members.

And he says, don't yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves, or those same members, unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God, for sin shall not have dominion over you. Look at verse 16. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves, servants to obey, his slaves ye are, to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.

Now what happens? What happens is that we are tempted, enticed by Satan through the world, to yield to the urges of our natural man in a way contrary to the will of God, tempted to sin. That sense of self-preservation, that selfishness in us, makes us want to do it, unless that's been dealt with very thoroughly at Calvary. And so finally, under the pressure of temptation, we yield and we obey that urge, and when we do, we yield some members of our being, whether it's our hands, or our tongue, or our eyes, or our ears, or our mind, or our feet, or whatever part of our being it is, we yield some member of our being as an instrument of sin.

Are you following me? Now when we do it once, it has not become a law. And maybe when we do it twice, it has not become a law. But when we yield that same member to that same temptation again, and again, and again, and again, after a while, we begin to form a sinful h-a-b-i-t, a sinful habit.

And as we yield that member of our being to that urge to sin, and we yield it over and over, and we commit that sin again and again with those members, with those members of our being we form a sinful habit, and it becomes a law of sin in our members. It becomes a way that the same old members react every time to that stimulation. And it becomes a sinful habit.

Now, habits are good things, if they're good habits. But we all have all kinds of habits that are good, don't we? Just, I'm not sure whether this is a good habit. When I preach, I always move my hands.

I've often wondered what would happen to me if they were tied behind me for an entire sermon. Maybe I could manage. But I have developed a habit of moving my hands, and so I just move them.

If you were to push something toward my eye, I would automatically close it like that. And even when I'm in a doctor's office, and he's trying to examine my eye, I have such a habit of closing it that it's almost impossible for me to keep it open. In fact, he has to take his fingers and hold it open.

And even then, it's all he can do, because as soon as he starts to put that thing up to my eye, everything in my eye wants to close. You see, it's just that way. It's a law.

Now, you develop all kinds of habits of eating and drinking and walking. If you hadn't developed the habit of walking, you wouldn't have been able to have gotten here very easily tonight. But you can walk, and you've developed the habit of talking, and all parts, members of your being.

God has created you so that if you do the same thing over and over and over with the members of your being, that you will develop habits so that life is much more simple for you, and much more pleasant, because you do all kinds of things just automatically. But the only problem with that is that we're sinners. And because we are sinners, we take the members of our being, and we commit sin with them again and again and again.

And we commit the same sin with the same members. And my friend, we develop sinful habits just as surely and just as powerfully and just as automatically as we develop any other habit in our life. And then we come to Christ, and we confess to him the sin that's in our lives and those sinful habits.

And we ask for the cleansing of the blood of Jesus, and God hears us, and he forgives us. And the blood of Christ cleanses our conscience, and the slate is wiped clean in heaven for every time we've ever committed that sin. But watch it, Christian, because you have developed some habits, and they are very powerful.

Does anybody understand what I'm talking about tonight? They are not easy to break, are they? Now you say, well, what can I do about it? Well, in Jeremiah 13, 23, we read, can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may you also do good that are accustomed, accustomed to do evil, that have developed a habit of doing evil. In the natural, in the natural, it is almost as impossible for a man to break a sinful habit as it is for a leopard to change his spots or a black man to become white. In the natural.

But aren't you thankful tonight that we have more than the natural? Isn't it wonderful that we have the supernatural, and that we have Christ, and we have the Holy Spirit, and we have the power of the word of God, and we have the tremendous crucifying power of the cross. We have all that's given to us in Jesus Christ to break these powerful habits that the natural man cannot control and cannot break. Now how can we triumph over this powerful urge to sin? I want to give to you very quickly now tonight three simple biblical procedures to triumph over this acquired urge to sin, a matter of sinful habits.

Three words to begin with are, if that will help, and I'm going to give them to you right now, you can write them down. Number one, repent. Oh, you say, my goodness, that's an old-fashioned word, but it's still in the Bible.

Amen? Repent. Number two, and this is the most important word I'm going to say in these three, replace. Replace, put that down.

And number three, regain. Regain, and I'll explain what I mean by that in a moment. You have now reached the end of side one of this recording.

Please turn to side two for the continuation of this message. Repent. Will you turn with me to Acts 3.19, the book of Acts, chapter 3, verse 19.

Peter is speaking. Acts 3.19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted. That means changed, to be converted, to be changed over into something else, like you convert your furnace from electricity to gas.

It's a change, it's a conversion. And we are to repent. To repent means to change your mind, to turn around, to go in the opposite direction.

We are to change our mind about our sins, we're to turn around, we're to go in the opposite direction, and we're to be changed, converted, changed over. That your sins may be blotted out. Oh, you say, Pastor, I'd be so thankful if God would blot out some of these sinful habits out of my life.

They are just defeating me all the time. When times of refreshing, or in then times of refreshing, or refreshing shall come time after time from the presence of the Lord. Time after time, God wants to send us refreshing, but it cannot happen until he can blot out our sins.

Now I want to ask you a serious question tonight about any sinful habits that are plaguing your life. It sounds simple, but it's essential. Listen carefully.

Do you really want thoroughly to be rid of that habit? Or do you like it just a little bit? Or just a whole lot? I'm certain that the first step to being delivered from a sinful habit is to come to the place where we thoroughly repent of that sin. Where we say, Oh God, I am tired of this sin, I hate this sin, I detest this sin, I don't want it, I turn away from it with all my heart. That definite decision must be made.

And if we are not sure that we want to be rid of it and free from it and have it out of our life, and if there is just the least vestige of a thought that we would like to leave some kind of a bridge behind us where the next time we have a very powerful urge and enticement that we can still enjoy that sin, then let's not talk about breaking our sinful habits. I know in my own life, and I remember a day when I got so sick of a sinful habit that was in my life and so fed up with it as a Christian and so disgusted and so tired of it, that I said to God, I'd rather be dead than to have this thing. That's when God said, Now he's serious.

Now he's ready for help. And there has to be a real determination to be through with that sin. On October 3, 1961, the following letter appeared in the health column of the Birmingham Post-Herald.

I lived in Birmingham, Alabama at the time. Let me read you what appeared in that health column. Dear Dr. Molner, my husband has a growth on the esophagus, which he refers to as a boil.

The Union Health Center told me that it is cancerous and that there must be a complete laryngectomy. He has been going through choking, coughing, headaches. I have to feed him strained baby food, soups, eggnog and soft noodles.

He will not go to the hospital. He stopped smoking because of too much burning, but he has not stopped drinking. I can see that it is very painful when he swallows the whiskey.

It is painful too when he swallows his food, but more so with liquor. When I asked him why he drinks so much, he said it gives him a lift and he thinks the alcohol will burn the boil off. What can I expect? Oh, you say, what a tragedy! A man who was not ready to change.

I think one of the most pitiful accounts I have ever read was a man sitting in a hospital who had lost his fingers and his toes through the blood vessel collapse that comes through extensive use of tobacco in some people. And he had lost his fingers and toes, and he had also had to have surgery on his tongue and had it removed, and some parts of his throat. And when a passerby in the hospital stopped to speak to him, he pointed to the man's cigarettes and pointed to the hole in his throat, desiring for the man to take a cigarette and put it in the hole in his throat and light it so that he could still go on with his destruction.

It is amazing the perverseness of mankind, isn't it? Do we want to be rid of that sinful habit? Are we ready to repent thoroughly before God? You say, yes, pastor, I really am, and I have really repented, and God knows how I want to be rid of it. All right, step number two, the procedure of replacement. Turn with me please to Ephesians chapter 4, Ephesians chapter 4, verses 25 to 32.

Let me ask you a question. When is a liar not a liar? Come on. When is a liar not a liar? I can't hear you.

Ah, yes. Many people would say a liar is no longer a liar when he stops telling lies. No, no.

That's not what the word of God says. Here is a basic principle to breaking sinful habits. Verse 25, Wherefore, putting away lying, that's repenting of our lying, putting it away with all our hearts, asking God to forgive us and cleanse us, that's fine as far as it goes, but it isn't enough.

Speak every man truth with his neighbor. Somebody says to me, How can I stop the habit of lying? I'm going to give you an absolutely sure way to break it tonight. Are you ready for a strong dose? But it will work.

Every time you tell the Holy Spirit, and you mean it, but you've got to be desperate. Somebody says, I just have a habit of lying. All right, you can get in the habit of lying.

Tell the Holy Spirit that every time you start to tell a lie, you want him to remind you right in the middle of it that you're lying. Did you get that? And when he reminds you, here's the hard part, and when he reminds you, you stop right in the middle of the lie, and you say to the person you're talking to, I'm lying. Oh, somebody already said real quick, I guess I don't want to give it up.

You say right then, Sir, I'm lying. Will you please forgive me? And then tell them the truth. You see, there's only one way to get rid of the habit of lying unless God performs a miracle.

Now God performs miracles sometimes and delivers people from sinful habits, but that's a healing miracle when God does that. He does it. He's done it thousands of times.

He's done it for me, and he's probably done it for you, but I cannot tell you why he doesn't do it with every sinful habit. God delivered me from some sinful habits miraculously and instantly through the power of the blood and the cross and the Holy Spirit. I cannot explain that, but there were some things he didn't do.

And with the habits that he doesn't deliver you from miraculously, you will never be delivered until you replace it with a godly habit. You see, that sinful habit was built up over years until it's become a law of sin in those members. You must replace it with a law of righteousness in those members.

A godly habit in the place of the sinful habit. And so if you're lying, you stop, humble yourself, look the man right in the face, and say, Sir, I'm lying. And I want God to help me to stop lying.

Will you please forgive me? And he'll probably say, Sure. And while he's still trying to get a hold of himself, then tell him the truth, the truth right on the spot. And I'm going to tell you something.

I'll bet that you can break the habit of lying in one week's time. I'll tell you why, because I believe the power of God will so come to your aid and the Holy Spirit will go to work so powerfully in your life and the cross of Christ will so deal with your pride that you'll find yourself developing a habit of telling the truth in a week's time. And when you've developed the habit, the godly habit of always telling the truth, there are two things that will happen.

You'll stop lying and you won't ever have to remember what you said. Amen? You didn't get the second part. You'll get it on my third point.

Oh, let's look at the next passage of scripture. It says, verse 28, Let him that stole, steal no more working with his hand. Is that what it says? No, that's the perverse version.

Let him that stole, steal no more. You say, a thief is no longer a thief when he stops stealing. Oh, no, no, no, no.

He may just have stopped stealing because a policeman is looking at him. He's still just as much a thief as ever, and as soon as the policeman goes around the corner, he's going right back to stealing. No, no, that doesn't mean he's not a thief because he's not stealing.

Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. A man has never ceased to be a thief until he is involved in honest labor and giving, giving to other people. You see, a man must develop the godly habit of giving to others in order to get rid of the sinful habit of taking from others.

Are you following me? Oh, you say, it's a strange doctrine. No, it isn't. It's a Bible doctrine.

No, no, it's right there. That's where it is, right there. I didn't make it up.

I wish somebody had taught it to me years ago. There's a lot of you sitting here tonight that are young people that are struggling with sinful habits. I wish somebody had taught me that when I was your age.

It would have saved me a lot of heartache, a lot of tears, and a lot of failure. I think I would have won a lot more souls to Christ in my life already than I have because I'd have been really living a victorious life a lot sooner. No, there it is, right in the scriptures.

Look at verse 29, same thing. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. Say, boy, I'd really like God to help me with that.

I have such a habit of my tongue running loose in both ears saying all kinds of corrupt things I don't want my tongue to say, but I've developed such a habit of it that I'm just doing it before I hardly know it. Well, what's the cure? But that which is good to the use of edifying that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Right in the middle of that sinful use of the tongue that has become so habitual, whether it's profanity, whether it's just angry statements, whether it's cutting someone else down or whatever corrupt use it is of the mouth and the tongue, right in the middle of it when the Holy Spirit checks you to stop and to ask the

forgiveness of the people around you, and then by the grace of God to start to use that tongue to say words of love and kindness and that will build that other person up instead of tearing them down.

Words that will edify or build up and minister grace to the hearer. And if you do it right on the spot, you watch the cross of Christ go to work in your life to deliver you from that habit, and you watch the Holy Spirit go to work in your life to give you such wisdom to think of the right things to say like you never dreamed. And you can develop godly habits of talking and speaking, just like you can develop sinful habits of talking and speaking.

And you'll never be free from the old ones, probably outside of either a miracle or doing what I'm saying tonight, replacing it with something different. Look at verse 31 and 32. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.

All right, that's putting it off. What do you put on? And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Turn to Colossians 3. I have to give you these verses quickly.

I'm not going to take time to deal with them individually, but let's just read them. Colossians 3, verse 7 talks about the way you walked sometime when you lived in them. That's the old things of the past, like the children of disobedience.

Verse 8, But now ye also put off, put off all these. What are you supposed to put off? Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth, lying out one to another, seeing you put off the old man with his deeds. Is that all? No.

And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Not enough to put it off. Somebody says, I've been trying and trying to quit these sinful things.

My brother, the way to victory is to fill your life with the positive righteousness of God. Look at verse 12, Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved. And you'll notice how opposite all these things are.

Bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another. Above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. Put off and put on.

A man was dying in a London hospital and a Christian going through that hospital and realizing his serious condition stopped and kindly spoke to the man and said, is there anything I can do? And the man said, no, sir, thank you. There's nothing. The Christian came back through again and noticed the man was much worse a few days later.

And he stopped again and said, sir, is there anything that I can do? The man said, no. And just as the Christian was turning to walk away, the man said quietly, is there anything that can undo? Aren't you glad you know something that can undo the blood of Jesus can wipe out our sins, no matter how numerous they have been or how terrible can all be wiped out and forgiven. The power of the Holy Spirit and the crucifying power of the cross can set us free from our present habits of sin, if we're willing to replace them with the godly habits that God wants to give us.

The final word, regain. I want to give this to you quickly now. Ephesians 4, 27.

Very short verse, but a very important one, speaking about this putting off and putting on, about this matter of sinful habits. It says, neither give place or ground to the devil. Now, what happens sometimes, not always, but what happens sometimes, and this is very important now tonight.

You've been such a good audience and the sermon is a little long, but this is so important for you to get. Sometimes in developing sinful habits, when Satan has enticed us again and again, and we have yielded again and again, until we've developed a law in some member, a sinful habit. In our yielding to the enticement of Satan, we yield to his power and his domination.

So that there are some areas in the lives of some Christians where Satan has gained ground in that life. And there are some sinful habits that seem lodged in the fiber of our being in a way that defies every effort to dislodge them. And when that is so, what I want to say to you tonight is that when all of this other that I've talked about has been done and there is still no victory, then we are not dealing with just the law of sin in our members, but we're dealing with the enslaving power of Satan.

And in that particular habit, we have yielded to Satan so long and so thoroughly that he has gotten a grip on that part of our life and he has ground in our life. We have given place to the devil. We have given him a place in our life and he rules over that place in our life and holds us in slavery in that one sinful habit in our life.

Well, what is the victory? Well, thank God there's victory through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Paul cried out and said, Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? And then he said, thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. The word of God says, and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.

The ground of Satan is removed through the cleansing and forgiveness of the blood. Are you listening? The ground of Satan is removed when we repent and when we are forgiven and cleansed in the blood from our sin, no matter what it was. The ground is there removed, but the power and the bondage is only removed through the name and authority of Jesus Christ.

And in Matthew chapter 18 and verse 19, we read, And whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. There is sometimes a need for a binding and a loosing, and I have sometimes been involved in this kind of a thing with a sinful habit. With other Christians, there are sometimes when we need to take a firm stand against Satan and in the name and authority of our risen and reigning Lord.

In Jesus' name, we need to bind the evil spirit that is controlling that member in our life. We bind that spirit in the name of Jesus and we loose that Christian and that member from the power and domination of that evil spirit in the name of Jesus Christ. And we regain the ground that has been yielded to Satan in that life.

In Africa there were some wild ducks that were feeding in the reeds along the edge of the river where the water flowed slowly. And there were some African boys that just could taste those ducks. And they wanted them the worst kind of a way, but they could not find a way to get them because every time they approached the edge of the river where the ducks were feeding, of course, they took off squawking and flapping and flew away.

And they tried swimming up to the ducks, but that did no good, they flew away just the same. They tried coming at them with a canoe, but they flew off. And so they sat down to decide how to trap these ducks.

And they suddenly hit on an idea. They went to a garden and got some pumpkins. And they hollowed out the pumpkins and put the top back in.

And then they floated the pumpkins into the river where they would float right down where the ducks were. Now the first time that the pumpkins came floating down where the ducks were, they took off with a great quacking and flapping and were gone. The next time they did the same, the next time the same.

But after a while, when those pumpkins came floating down the river every day at the same time, some of them started to get used to them. And then after a while, they finally all got used to them, until the boys could put the pumpkins in the river and they would float right through the midst of the ducks and they would never pay any attention. And then when that time came, that they had become thoroughly accustomed.

And seeing those pumpkins was a habit of their life. Then those clever African boys removed the top from the pumpkins, turned them upside down, put little holes in for eyes and put them over their heads. Then they quietly slipped into the river and floated down the stream under the water.

And as the pumpkins floated among the ducks again, as usual, they reached up and grabbed their feet from under the water and had them a delicious meal of duck. Amusing, isn't it? But it's not amusing when Satan has floated a sinful, sinful trap by us until we're so used to it. And we've committed it so many times and it's become such a bondage in our life that we do not realize that the devil has laid a trap and that he intends to destroy our Christian life, our Christian witness, and our Christian usefulness.

My Christian friend, you cannot afford to allow any sinful habit to remain in your life. For looking underneath the pumpkin may be the malevolent eye of the enemy of your soul who goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, who longs to destroy your Christian life and testimony and bring it to naught. The law, my members, victory through repentance, through replacement, and in the name and the blood of Jesus, regaining all the ground that's been yielded to Satan.

Victory through Christ. Let us bow in prayer.

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