

# How the Spirit Leads Us - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of allowing God to work in our lives to overcome the chameleon of lust and become more holy, leading to freedom and increased speed in the Christian life.*

**Duration:** 8:33

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 1:15

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of aligning our inner Christian life with our outward appearance, highlighting the need for true holiness in all aspects of our lives. It stresses the significance of allowing God to sanctify us from within, even in the hidden areas that no one sees, and the necessity of surrendering to God's work of transformation, no matter how painful it may be. The analogy of removing a chameleon-like lust from our lives is used to illustrate the process of allowing God to cleanse and free us from sinful strongholds, leading to a deeper, more liberated Christian walk.

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## Transcript

I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, many of you have heard me for many years, does your inner, hidden Christianity match the outward impression that you give to people as to how holy a person you are? We do give people an impression we are holy if we come regularly to the meetings, we carry a Bible, pay attention, we come to a church which preaches holiness, boy, our repetition for holiness really goes up. But it may not be true in our inner life, it may not be true in our thoughts, it may not be true in the words we speak at home to our family members, it may not be true in the way you handle money, it may not be true in the way you work in your office or behave in a bus or a train. See, those are the areas of our life nobody sees and to me, I'll tell you honestly, those areas are much, much more important than coming to a meeting or even reading the Bible.

It's more important to obey the Bible than to read it. It's no use reading it every day if you obey it only once in a while. So, who can make me holy inside? It says your God will do it.

But he'll never do anything if I don't allow him. He'll do it. But he says, let me do it.

You allow me. It's like you go to a surgeon and the surgeon says, I can remove that cancer completely from inside you. But you've got to let me cut you open and operate you.

And you say, no, that's too painful or I don't trust you. But then you die of your cancer, that's all. And he's willing to do it free.

You can't do it yourself. You can't cut yourself open and remove the cancer. It's something like that.

God says, I'll do it. But you've got to let me. You've got to say, Lord, come into this area of my life and cut out this cancer, this thing that I'm attached to.

Anything that you're attached to, I'll tell you, you cannot sanctify yourself. Learn that lesson. The Old Testament, they spent 1,500 years to try and sanctify themselves.

They couldn't. Do you want to spend another 20, 30 years trying to prove that you also can't? I don't want to. People have tried for 1,500 years and failed.

And I also tried for a few years and failed. I don't want to imagine that I can make myself holy because I can't. I can only open the door to let God come and make me holy.

God come and cut out things in my life which are actually ruining me. Some time ago, I told you a little parable that C.S. Lewis says in one of his books of a man who wanted to be holy, but he had this chameleon, this ugly lizard sitting on his shoulder. It's a picture of a lust.

Whatever lust is ruling your life, it could be anger, it could be bitterness, it could be illegal sex, it could be anything. It's this filthy lizard, chameleon, sitting there. And they are good friends, this man.

And here's an angel standing in front of him and saying, you know, you've got to get rid of that. Will you let me take it off you? This chameleon whispers in his ear and says, no, no, no, I won't. I'll behave myself in the future, please.

I like to be with you. You and I are good friends. We've been friends from childhood.

You want to get rid of me now? And he's in a struggle. You know the struggle you face when you're tempted? You want to do what's right, but there's something else in you that says, no, I'd like to enjoy this. Even though you know it's filthy, you enjoy it, you keep this dirty animal.

And yet at the same time, you hear that other voice saying, yeah, I want to get rid of it. But this is the struggle this man went through. And then he told the angel, why don't you just pull it off without asking me? He says, no, I can't do it.

That's the point I want you to know. I cannot do it till you give me permission, because that would be violating your free will. You know why we are not more holy than we are right now? Because certain areas we have not given permission to God to come in and take over.

We've not allowed him to operate certain areas of our body. We've not allowed him to take away that ugly thing. And here's the struggle goes on between this chameleon and this man and this angel.

And the angel's waiting patiently. And finally he decides, yeah, I've decided. I'm going to get rid of this lust.

He can't do it himself. So he tells the angel, OK. He closes his eyes and braces himself for the pain there will be, because this chap is clinging tightly to his shoulder.

And the angel pulls it away. And the chameleon tears his flesh. It's pretty painful.

I'll tell you, it is painful to give up a lust, because you've enjoyed it for so many years. It's deeply rooted. The claws are inside.

And he tears it away in this pain. And the man screams in pain. And then the angel throws that chameleon down on the ground.

And suddenly it transforms itself into a strong white horse. And he says, now you don't have to walk. You can ride.

You can go faster. It's a very true parable. That thing which appears to give you so much pleasure, which you're so reluctant to give up, it could be a bitterness against somebody.

It could be a dirty habit that your conscience tells you is wrong. It's bad. Jesus would not do that.

But you hear that voice, and you don't listen to it. The chameleon says, no, no, no, I'll behave. It'll never behave.

It'll leave you. It'll just let its claws go deeper and deeper into you. That's all.

I hope one day you will say what that man said. Shut your eyes, brace yourself for the pain, and say, Lord, take it away. I allow you to come and take it away.

And it'll cause you pain. There's a suffering in the flesh, the Bible says, which 1 Peter 4, verse 1 and 2 says, the one who suffers in the flesh stops sinning. If I don't want to suffer in the flesh, I don't stop sinning.

It's not possible. See, that's why we are reluctant. There's a suffering.

The opposite of suffering is pleasure. I want to get that pleasure, so I avoid the suffering, and so I remain in sin. But if I decide that, Lord, I'm willing to suffer, after a while, this wound will heal, which the chameleon made.

It'll take some time, then you won't even remember it. Ask people who have given up some bad habits which ruled them for many years. Ask them today, do you feel the struggle now? They say, not at all.

I struggled in the beginning, but it's gone now, and I'm so happy it's gone, and I'm so free. And that thing which I kept for so long in my life hindered me from moving faster in the Christian life, because that is the thing that got converted into a horse. Do you know that every lust that you conquer speeds you on in the Christian life? Really, it's true.

It's very true. And that thing which you allow to rule in your life is what's hindering you from moving

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