

# ***HOW TO BECOME LIKE JESUS***

All commands in New Testament can be summed up like this: “Be who you are IN CHRIST!”

Thus, sanctification is the process of becoming who you are already in Christ. We grow to be more like him every day. God uses our successes and failures to make sure this happens by the power of his Holy Spirit.

We forget who we are. We forget the power residing in us—the Holy Spirit. We forget we are free. We forget we are alive in Christ today and we don’t have to return to our old ways. Remember the good news. Remember who you are now because of what Jesus has accomplished. It is finished! Now act like it.

Now how does this happen?

In the context of walking through this process with a small group, here is what I think helps for group leaders in the stage of “putting off the old”:

## ***IDENTIFY WHAT NEEDS TO BE PUT OFF***

1. Identify what the sin is (You have know what to put off)
2. Identify when it happens (know the circumstances, habits, seasons of life)
3. Identify why it happens (What is at the root of this particular sin? Usually it is a lie or a false gospel, idol, pseudo-savior)

## ***WHAT IS IT?***

Ask God to reveal to you through his Word so that you may better identify areas of temptation.

Ask your brothers and sisters in Christ to identity certain habits. We don’t always see our weaknesses. You can know what the sin is by praying, reading, and seeking counsel from your community.

## ***WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?***

When are you more tempted to sin? Are you prone to complain when major tasks come? Does social media lead you to covet? Do lonely late nights lead you to porn and other sexually immoral acts? Does pressure at work create additional anger? Identify the when and create the setting so you can best see patterns to address.

## ***WHY DID IT HAPPEN?***

We never sin out of a sense of duty—“I had to do this”. Ultimately, we all sin because in that moment and leading up to it we wanted to do it. Our hearts, rather than being soaked and satisfied in love for Jesus and joy in him, were craving after something or someone else. These are the motivations that finally and fully push into our sinful behaviors. If we don’t ever get to the heart level of why we sin, we could change morally but never do so with the right heart before God. Moreover, true, lasting, and deep change always happens when our hearts first begin to crave more of Jesus and less of sin by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Here are some practical ways to see our sinful motivations and false gospels we tend to believe:

Anger and aggressive behavior will give me what I want. It will allow my voice to be heard and justice served.

The compliments and praise of people will give worth and help deal with my sense of inadequacy

More stuff and the accumulation of wealth will give me deeper security in life.

Pornography and sexually immoral behaviors will keep me from loneliness and a lack of physical satisfaction.

(Some of this material found in Gospel-Centered Discipleship by Jonathan Dodson and How People Change by Lane and Tripp)

## ***ONCE THIS HAPPENS WE CAN NOW KILL THE SIN***

We fight the sin by putting it to death. This comes via our submission to the Holy Spirit. Cry out to God and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you towards more of Jesus and less of yourself in the moment. We plead with God through Holy Spirit to make true in our actions and desires what is already said about us in Jesus. Repent of what you've done. Consider what Christ went through to save you. Consider the better way of life found through him. Confess that you need and desire real change. We are saved and safe in him so let us act like it. Doing this isn't so much about more restrictions and less excitement, but about real freedom and more joy in Christ. Don't expect immense change overnight but realize this is a long and steady process. It is slow to happen but it is sure to happen.

## ***LOOK TO CHRIST***

It's been said many times by many Christian writers and theologians that many of our sins can be traced back to a lack of joy in Christ. So if we are desiring to follow him and obey him, then our temptations need to be hit with a question. That is, "What do I want that I cannot already enjoy in a holy way by taking of Christ rather than giving into sin?"

Some practical steps to take in doing this:

Evaluate the sin

Fill your mind with the awful reality of sin that Jesus had to die because of it

Long to be changed, set free, made whole again

Consider how the Spirit may help you

Meditate on God's word

Seek him in prayer and with others in prayer

Anticipate change and look to new life in Christ by preaching the gospel to yourself

## ***PUTTING ON CHRIST DAILY***

Engage the Spiritual Disciplines:

Bible reading/ prayer; fasting (certain times call for this)

Engage community

Real with others is key to seeing deep change

Engage your vocation

Acting like Christ is crucial BUT also living for him in all that you do during your day at work and recreation

Here are a few passages leaders should consider helpful as you meditate on the topic of sanctification:

**COLOSSIANS: 3**

**JOHN: 14-16**

**MATTHEW: 5-7**

**EPHESIANS: 2**

**ROMANS: 5-8**

**GALATIANS: 5**