

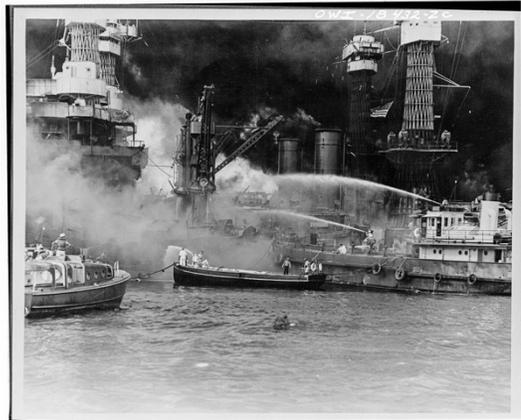
IT'S TIME (PART 2)
ROMANS 13:11-14

In 1940, Japan formed an alliance with Axis powers Germany and Italy, to the dismay of Isoroku Yamamoto, the commander-in-chief of Japan's Combined Fleet. He protested the alliance without success and then set about the task of preparing for what he perceived as an inevitable war with the United States.

In that same year, other Japanese planners evaluated the strength of Japan and the US and determined that "The United States had more steel, more wheat, more oil, more factories, more shipyards, more of nearly everything than the Empire...[Further] the industrial capacity of the United States was 74 times greater, and that it had 500 times more oil [than Japan]." Yamamoto's task seemed insurmountable. But he devised a plan — to hit the US "in the chest" — with a bold attack at Pearl Harbor. "Japan, as the smaller power, must settle it 'on its first day' with a strike so breathtaking and brutal that American morale 'goes down to such an extent that it cannot be recovered.'"

And so he attacked, launching 183 airplanes from his aircraft carriers in the first wave of the attack and then following that with 170 more plans in a second attack. **The devastation on Pearl Harbor** was brutal —

By the end, 19 U.S. ships lay destroyed or damaged, and among the 2,403 Americans dead or dying were 68 civilians. Nothing as catastrophically unexpected, as self-image-shattering, had happened to the nation in its 165 years. "America is speechless," a congressman said the next day, as the smell of smoke, fuel and defeat hovered over Pearl. Long-held assumptions about American supremacy and Japanese inferiority had been holed as surely as the ships. "With astounding success," Time wrote, "the little man has clipped the big fellow." The Chicago Tribune conceded, "There can be no doubt now about the morale of Japanese pilots, about their general abilities as fliers, or their understanding of aviation tactics." It was now obvious the adversary would take the risks that defied American logic and could find innovative ways to solve problems and use weapons. The attack was "beautifully planned," [Admiral] Kimmel would say, as if the Japanese had executed a feat beyond comprehension.



Why was Japan so successful on that initial attack against America? Historian [Steve Twomey writes](#):

Although the disaster destroyed the careers of both the Navy and the Army commanders on Oahu, exhaustive investigations made it clear that its causes went beyond any individual in Hawaii or Washington, D.C. Intelligence was misread or unshared. Vital communiqués were ambiguous. Too many search planes had been diverted to the Atlantic theater.

Most devastating, Americans simply underestimated the Japanese. Their success at Pearl Harbor was due partly to astounding good luck, but also to American complacency, anchored in two assumptions: that our Asian adversary lacked the military deftness and technological proficiency to pull off an attack so daring and so complicated, and that Japan knew and accepted that it would be futile to make war on a nation as powerful as the United States.

The inherent power and strength of America seemed to make its defenses impenetrable. We seemed ready. But we weren't. And we paid a tremendous price for our presumption and unpreparedness.

The account of Pearl Harbor serves as an allegory for our spiritual lives. Because we have believed in Christ as our Savior, we are tempted to presume we need nothing more; we are safe. And if we are in Christ, our eternal destiny *is* secure. There is nothing that might rip us out of the protective hand of God. Yet, there is something more that we have been called to do; we have a calling to act on our salvation — to pursue sanctification, to live out the reality of what we are in Christ.

In Paul's terminology in Romans 13, we can say that some of us have fallen asleep and have been inattentive to the need to act intentionally and aggressively to pursue sanctification. As we consider the timing of the Lord's return — His soon and imminent return — we say with Paul, it's time for us to act. When we consider what we are in Christ and Christ's goal for us, we cannot be apathetic about our salvation. We need to act on our salvation and pursue transformation. In Romans 13:11-14 Paul says —

IT IS TIME TO INTENTIONALLY ACT ON THE SALVATION WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN.

It is time to aggressively pursue sanctification. In these verses, **Paul calls us** to three actions and provides us one extended motivation for our actions. Last time we considered the first action and the motive for acting; this morning we look at the final two calls to action.

1. **It's Time to Do **SOMETHING** (v. 11a)**
2. ****WHY** We Should Take Spiritual Action (vv. 11b-12a)**
3. **It's Time to Put Off **SINFUL DEEDS** (vv. 12b, 13, 14b)**
 - ✓ The principle **STATED** (v. 12b)
 - ✓ The principle applied to particular **SINS** (v. 13)
 - ✓ The principle **SUMMARIZED** (v. 14b)
4. **It's Time to Put on **CHRIST'S ARMOR** (v. 12c, 14a)**
 - ✓ The principle **STATED** (v. 12c)
 - ✓ The principle applied to one **PARTICULAR** desire (v. 14a)

1. It's Time to Do **SOMETHING** (v. 11a)

- Following what he has said about loving one another in the church body (vv. 8-10), Paul says, **do this**.
 - ✓ Paul is exhorting his readers to all the particular acts of service that he has mentioned in chs. 12-13 as an expression of their sanctification. It's time to take seriously the responsibility to be sanctified.
 - ✓ By that, I do not mean that we sanctify ourselves; if we see a sanctified man, we know that it is the work of the Spirit of God in Him (which is the point of chapter 8 — cf. **8:11, 13**).
 - ✓ But there is a cooperation between the believer and the Spirit by which the believer willingly and joyfully submits to and follows the work of the Spirit (8:13-14). **Philippians 2:12-13** — God is working and we work. There is no sanctification apart from our labors.
- Paul is calling and exhorting us to sanctification. Our salvation should produce genuine change and transformation in our lives. We have been given the Spirit of God who He will sanctify us; we are responsible to cooperate with Him in the process of our sanctification. No one is sanctified accidentally.
- Thomas Watson said this sanctification is, “the main thing a Christian should look after...it is the one thing needful.” It is time for us to pursue sanctification with all our energy. Why?

2. **WHY** We Should Take Spiritual Action (vv. 11b-12a)

- In the heart of the book (chs. 4-8), Paul explained the connection between justification (the declaration of our righteousness) and sanctification (the working out of our salvation). Because we have been justified we should live our lives as an expression of that salvation (we are not saved by works, but our genuine salvation will always work). We see this in sections like **6:11-14; 8:4-8**. This was the very testimony of the Romans (**1:8; 16:19**).
- Remember the gospel message in Romans — 1) we are sinners (**3:10-18, 23**); 2) Christ alone is the reason we can be declared righteous (**3:24-25**) — we only “contribute” our sin to our salvation; 3) the means of salvation is by believing in Jesus (**3:28; 4:24-25**). If you do not believe yet, I call you to believe.
- In these verses, Paul is building on the gospel by calling believers to be sanctified in particular ways — to act on their salvation *because* the time of Christ's return is near. His return is no time to be spiritually asleep (**awaken from sleep**), but it is a time to be alert, attentive, and active (**do this**).
- There is an accountability to God for believers according to what He has given us to serve Him (e.g.,) — we should be cognizant of the immanency of His return and that should be a stimulant to faithfulness (1 Cor. 3:10, 15; 4:5; **2 Cor. 5:10**; Mt. 25:19ff; **2 Pt. 3:10-11**).
- We might sum up these verses: “Christ is coming soon; it is urgent to be sanctified and live out the reality of what He has done for us.” When Christ comes He will set all things right for all eternity. Let's prepare for that coming.

3. It's Time to Put Off **SINFUL DEEDS** (vv. 12b, 13, 14b)

• The principle **STATED** (v. 12b)

- ✓ The verb **lay aside** is only used 9x in the NT, but it regularly appears in sanctification passages (e.g., Eph. 4:22, 25; Col. 3:8; Heb. 12:1; Js. 1:21; 1 Pt. 2:1). This has the idea of taking off the filthy garments of sin; just as we don't wear our yard-working jeans and t-shirt to a black-tie dinner, but we take them off before we go to the party, so we don't continue to engage in the sinful practices that we did when we were unredeemed sinners. Christ died to liberate us from those deeds.
- ✓ Because we are believers in Christ, sin is now contrary to what we are; it is inconceivable that we would continue to cultivate desires and engage in sins that are opposed to what Jesus has saved us to be and do (e.g., 6:1-2, 11-12).
- ✓ What are we to lay aside? Put off **the deeds of darkness**. Darkness in Scripture typically denotes evil, the sin nature, and our old position in Adam (before redemption). It indicates both where sin comes from (Mt. 6:23) and where sinners will ultimately go (Mt. 25:30).
- ✓ What we should particularly note from this command is that it is *possible* as a believer to obey God. The believer in Christ is now able to put off, stop, and end this madness towards sin and evil. He is not bound by the sin but he is able to be renewed and act and live a renewed life. This is not a futile command. God never calls us to do anything that we have not been equipped to do. If He says, "put it off," it is possible to put it off. It's not impossible. There is no "I can't" in the spiritual life.
- ✓ So the principle is this: the believer in Christ is to be purposeful in fighting against remaining sin in his life and aggressively labor to not sin.
- ✓ Are we being watchful about influences of evil? Have we "fallen asleep" to godliness and awakened to sin (v. 11)? Are we more interested in sin than transformation *from sin*? We have been enabled by the Gospel and the gift of the Spirit to change. It's time to take seriously the call to put off sin.

• The principle **applied to particular SINS** (v. 13)

- ✓ What kind of deeds should the believer lay aside? To what kinds of temptation should we be attentive, alert, and watchful? He identifies three categories of sin — this "vice list" is not exhaustive; it is only representative of the kinds of sins we should be alert to put off.
- ✓ Notice that as Paul introduces these categories he begins by saying, **Let us behave properly as in the day** — that is let us live as if the day of Christ's return has already come. We know how we will act then; let us act that way now. It's akin to what he says in 2 Cor. 5:9.
- ✓ Paul addresses three categories of sin:
 1. Physical appetites — **carousing and drunkenness**.
 - ... The first word refers to eating and feasting, and the second to alcoholic beverages; they both refer to the excesses involved with both.

... This is gorging on physical appetites — binging on things that might be acceptable in other contexts and taking them to excess; if he were writing in 2021 he might include binge watching TV or binge buying on Amazon. The problem with these sins is that the base activity is not itself sinful (e.g., eating is not a sin) but that it is done in the wrong context and without restraint — “one is good, four is better...”

... These terms are also plurals, indicating they are frequent, repeated patterns of life.

2. Sexual lusts — ***sexual promiscuity and sensuality***.

... The first word is similar to our “going to bed” with someone who is not our spouse. It is illicit sexual activity — typically this would be fornication or adultery.

... The second word is a lack of restraint in sexual conduct — it is indulgent sexual excess. It is “shameless greed” and “animal lust.” It is self-centered and unloving — it is sexuality that takes and does not lovingly give. It is shameful, flaunted debauchery.

... As with the first pair of sins, it is the twisting perversion of a good gift from God, so what is done is wrong, and the motive for the sinful act is also wrong (self-indulgence).

... These terms are also plurals, again suggesting that they are frequent, repeated actions.

... It is also notable that both these first two pairs of sins typically happen at ***night*** — Paul likely chose them to match with the ***deeds of darkness*** he advises the believer to put off.

3. Personal conflict — ***strife and jealousy***.

... The first word refers to dissension, discord, arguments, enmity, and antagonism. It’s conflict with the intent to win and to harm the other person. It doesn’t care about the cost of the argument to others as long as one wins. It is motivated by self-indulgent ego.

... The second word is “zeal” — an intensely negative feeling over another’s achievements, position, or possessions. “You have it and I want it and I deserve it (more than you).”

... Like the other words, the center of these sins is that they are wrapped around the self — “what is most important is me and what I get.”

✓ Again, these lists are representative; there are many other kinds of sins to put off (e.g., Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 1:29-31; Eph. 5:3-5).

✓ If we were to summarize these lists even more we might say, “Put off thinking about yourself and about exalting yourself and getting what you want. You are not pre-eminent and what you get is not most important. You have died to self; you need to die to self (6:6, 11-12).”

• The principle **SUMMARIZED (v. 14b)** — Paul has three emphases in this verse:

✓ ***Make no provision*** = The idea is that we make a plan and think ahead about how we will handle sinful temptations. “Have foresight and plan ahead for anticipated temptations.”

➤ “Stop making no plan not to sin” — or “start making a plan *not* to sin...” How can you change your life so you will not even face the temptation to sin?

- Luther said, “You can’t keep the bird from flying over your head but you can keep him from building a nest in your hair.” That’s true. But it’s also true that I can go places and do things where I am also unlikely to even have the bird fly over my head — if I park my car under a tree I am more likely to leave with bird droppings on my car than if I park away from trees.
 - ... If I go to the mall or Amazon, I am more likely to spend money I don’t have than if I don’t go.
 - ... If I go to a buffet I am more likely to eat more calories than I have budgeted for the day; if I anticipate where I will eat that evening I will more likely budget my calories wisely.
 - ... If I go to the beach on June 1, I am more likely to be tempted to lust than if I go for a hike in the mountains on October 1.
 - ... If I watch Fox News or read the CNN website I am more likely to be angry and complain than if I read my Bible or John MacArthur’s latest book.
 - ... If I don’t intentionally think about serving RJ on my drive home and anticipate what she might need help with that evening, I am much more likely to pout and be argumentative when she asks for help and doesn’t immediately ask about my day.
 - ... If I rehearse conflicts in my mind I am more likely to be unforgiving than if I remind myself of my need to search my own heart and my own life for my own logs first.
- Paul’s point is simply that our natural (ungodly) inclination is to not take sin seriously and not to be intentional about fighting against it. *We lose because we don’t have a plan to fight.* We might not say “let go and let God,” but when we do not make a plan, that’s the way we are living.
- This is also a warrior mentality; Paul is reminding us that we are in a battle with sin. It will not always be easy. Sin must be fought against and it will take work and perseverance.
- ✓ **For the flesh** — this is a reminder that while we have been moved out of Adam and into Christ, there is still an inclination to go back to the old way of living. We are justified (declared righteous), but we are not yet fully righteous (and won’t be until we get to eternity).
 - The flesh is anything that moves us away from Christ and towards self-indulgent sin.
 - The flesh is anything that says, “I am King and Christ is not King.” It is rebellion against God.
- ✓ **In regard to its lusts** — that is, the flesh has a desire for us, and it is not for our good.
 - Puritan Thomas Manton said, “Every corruption has a voice...” Temptation to sin will speak to our minds and hearts, and that speech has a motive for us. And the motive is destruction.
 - No matter how good sin feels in a moment (and it often “feels” really good), it will only destroy.
 - Sinful temptation wants our death (Js. 1:14-15; 1 Pt. 2:11); we must be aware of its lust & fight.
- ✓ Augustine was a highly intelligent person, but his intelligence could not help him conquer his sin — particular his sexual indulgences. One day while walking he heard a playing child say, “Take up and read,” and he went home and opened his copy of the Bible and this verse is what he first saw. And God used this verse to bring Augustine to salvation and free him from his bondage. God can do the same with you and me.

- ✓ How are you doing? Are you making provision for sin? Are you lazy and not fighting? Are you making excuses and indulging in sinful desires, thoughts, and actions?
- ✓ Then hear what Paul says — Christ is coming and it is time to wake up and put off (stop) these sins and take up the armor to fight against these sins, which is his final point...

4. It's Time to Put on **CHRIST'S ARMOR** (v. 12c, 14a)

- The principle **STATED** (v. 12c)

- ✓ It's not enough to take off our dirty yard working clothes before we go to the dinner party; we need a shower and our tuxedo or finest attire. And the same is true spiritually; we don't need to just stop sinning, but we also need to start doing the righteous (God-intended) corresponding act to the sin.
- ✓ So Paul says, **Put on the armor of light** (v. 12c) — that instead of doing things that correspond to living in the evil darkness, we put on the actions and attitudes that correspond to the righteous light of Christ and His heavenly kingdom.
- ✓ As with the word “put off,” when he says **put on** he is talking about being purposeful and he means that this is now something we *can* do; when we did not believe in Christ, we could not obey and please God, but now that we are in Christ we can please Him — so do that!
- ✓ Here he also uses the word **armor** — he uses that term elsewhere (Eph. 6:13-17; 2 Cor. 6:7; 1 Thess. 5:8). Rather than focus on what the pieces of armor on, let us just notice that he is using warfare imagery. It's a battle. It's a fight. It's hard work. He uses similar imagery in his final letter (**2 Tim. 2:4-6**). Too often, we lose the fight against sin because we are unwilling to “go into training” and do the hard things to fight — we want to be Olympic athletes who train by watching movies and eating buckets of popcorn. Friends, life against this world is a fight and it always will be. Anytime we don't think it's a fight and we stop preparing for the fight, we will give in to the flesh.
- ✓ “Christians cannot afford to remain in the unprotected condition of scantily clothed sleepers at a time when the situation calls for ‘armor.’” [Fitzmyer] Get in the fight and grab your armor...

- The principle applied to one **PARTICULAR** desire (v. 14a)

- ✓ The particular armor we are to put on is — **the Lord Jesus Christ** (v. 14).
 - Notice the three-fold title and name of Jesus — put on His mastery of you (submission to Him), His attributes as the sinless, incarnate Jesus, and His attributes as the exalted God and Messiah.
 - To “put on” Jesus is not some mystical process, but it is simply to say, start practicing those actions and cultivating those desires which emulate Jesus Christ. “Be like Jesus, your Lord.”
 - We have been identified with Jesus Christ (**6:3**), so we should live in that way (**6:4**).
 - Do you remember **8:29**? We have been saved to live so that He is the firstborn — the pre-eminent and most important Person anywhere and at any time. That's Paul's intent.

- “...we are consciously to embrace Christ in such a way that his character is manifested in all that we do and say.” [Moo] We want Him and we want to do things that emulate Him.
- ✓ Sin will always entice us when we have not savored Christ. When we don’t run to Christ, enjoy Christ and delight in Christ, sinful desires and activities will inevitably captivate and control us.
- ✓ The way out of sin is to abide (live) in Christ. Sin will lose its grip on our hearts when we cling to Christ. Put off sin and fight against the flesh by cultivating your passion for Christ.
- ✓ We love and practice sin because we don’t love and practice Christlikeness. The expulsive power of a new affection for Christ will diminish your affection for sin.
- ✓ It’s time to get fight the fight of faith and fight against sin and for Christ.

CONCLUSION: On December 7, 1941, it appeared that America was unprepared; but you know that wasn’t the end of the story. Historian Steve Twomey continues —

...out there in the harbor, something deeply heroic was taking place. Through the ten months he had commanded at Pearl Harbor, [Admiral] Kimmel [Commander of the Pacific Fleet] had insisted on endless training, on knowing the proper thing to do and the proper place to be; now that training was becoming manifest. His men began shooting back, from the big ships, from the destroyers and cruisers, from rooftops and parking lots, from the decks of the submarines right below his windows. Within five minutes or less, a curtain of bullets and anti-aircraft shells began rising, the first of 284,469 rounds of every caliber the Fleet would unleash. An enraged enlisted man threw oranges at the enemy...

...Yamamoto was correct: Japan had begun a war it could never win, not in the face of the industrial might of an enraged and now-wiser America. The military damage of the attack—as opposed to the psychological—was far less than first imagined. Feverish repairs on the battleships commenced, in Hawaii and then on the West Coast. The Fleet would exact its revenge shortly, at the Battle of Midway, when American carrier pilots sank four of the Japanese carriers that had shocked Pearl. And on September 2, 1945, the battleship West Virginia, now recovered from the wounds of December 7, stood among the naval witnesses to the surrender of the Japanese in Tokyo Bay.



This also serves as an allegory for our spiritual lives. We are in a battle and we may have taken some devastating losses and injuries. There is still time to get back in the battle for our spiritual maturity and growth. It’s time to take up the armor of Christ and fight against the temptations of the flesh that inevitably will fight against us. The night of sin is almost over and the day of Christ’s return is coming quickly. Now is the time to appropriate what Christ has given us so that we can be all that Christ has re-created us to be.

BENEDICTION: Prayer for baptism participant