

Seven Deadly Sins – Affections that steal your joy.

Week 1

What comes to mind when you think about “The Seven Deadly Sins”?

Can we name all seven?

Where did we get seven deadly sins (7DS)?

Evagrius of Pontus (346-399AD) – Desert Monk,

First to record the list, 8 Thoughts or demons that hinder a monk’s pursuit of God.

John Cassian (360-430AD) – Evagrius Disciple

Creates a sort of guide later adopted by the Benedictine Monks.

Began ordering the list by carnal to spiritual.

Pope Gregory I (540-604AD) – Pope

Separate out pride as root of all sin.

Adds envy, combines sadness and sloth.

Thomas Aquinas (13th Century)

He calls them the "capital sins" because they are the head and form of all the others.

Designated venial and mortal sins, not theologically accurate.

All sin is equally spiritually deadly. (Romans 6:23, James 2:10)

How is this list helpful?

The list is not biblical in its grouping but these are certainly biblically rooted sins. The grouping is a manmade grouping for the sake of helpfulness in our battle against sin. This is why I want to spend our next few weeks together, so we can be helped in our battle against sinful affections that minimize our joy.

7DS, offer us opportunity to examine our personal sanctification from various lens.

This list has really since it’s inception been about areas where we can be ensnared and where sin can distract us from our pursuit of intimacy with God. This list can serve as a diagnostic to identify and ultimately defeat our personal patterns of sin.

It is embracing the heart of the Psalmist who wants to be pure before God and therefore says...

Psalm 139:23–24

[23] Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!

[24] And see if there be any grievous way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting! (ESV)

When I read over the vices or sins in this list I see many struggles which are prevalent in our culture today. This I believe speaks in some ways to the quality of this grouping which in large part were created a little over 1600 years ago.

Are there currently any specific tools you use in your life to examine yourself for spiritual growth opportunity?

(The D's, Communal and or individual accountability)

7DS aim at capital or root sins.

From early on these sins began to be identified as capital vices or sins. What they meant by that is that most of our other sins branch off of these core issues. So my desire to murder is likely rooted in my anger or envy or pride... these capital vices then produce a myriad of sinful behaviors. So if I can address the deeper issue then I actually will gain victory over not just this one sin but rather the many sins that spring forth from that capital sin.

This concept has some biblical validation in scriptures like...

1 Timothy 6:10

[10] For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. (ESV)

Or even in the positive... Love covers many sins... (Prov 10:12, 1 Pet 4:8)

Colossians 3:14

[14] And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (ESV)

7DS address the long-term nature of our sin struggle.

Not only is it helpful to think of this list in terms of capital sins, sins which beget more sins... I believe we should see these sins as not singular choices but rather long-term relationships. As we look at these sins we will not be addressing lust from the perspective of one moment of failure but rather how a person thinks about others and how they relate to lust as a source of satisfaction on a consistent basis. That will be true of pride and greed and all these sins.

These vices are to be distinguished from sinfulness on the one hand, and single sinful acts on the other. “Vices concern deeply rooted patterns in our character, patterns broader than a single act but narrower than our sinful condition in general.” That is, one angry outburst does not in itself mean that wrath is your vice. But if you are as adept at unleashing hostile words as Indiana Jones is at lashing a whip, wrath has a nameplate on the door of your heart.

Vices don’t take hold overnight. Instead, they “are gradually internalized and become firm and settled through years of formation.” They are thus habitual sins, patterns woven deeply into the fabric of your disposition and temperament. Like Jacob Marley’s chains in Dickens’ A Christmas Carol, they are forged by our own choices and actions, one cruel link at a time. They encompass us, weigh us down, and follow us everywhere.

Therefore, this list of vices can also have diagnostic value. Studying the Big Seven can help us “to recognize and identify networks of sin in our lives and discover layers of sin of which we were previously unaware.”

“Hit List” Brian Hedges

“A vice (or its counterpart, a virtue), first of all, is a habit or a character trait. Unlike something we are born with—such as an outgoing personality or a predisposition to have high cholesterol levels—virtues and vices are acquired moral qualities. We can cultivate habits or break them down over time through our repeated actions, and thus we are ultimately responsible for our character.”

“Glittering Vices” Konyndyk DeYoung

I call these sins relational sins because many times we make room for them in our lives. They are sins that we want, even if we don’t like to admit it. We will often justify, downplay or even outright dismiss their destructive and evil nature.

In scripture the people of God were called out for being in an adulteress relationship with the world. They were God’s but they had been unfaithful to God by their relationship with the world. That relationship was not momentary it was perpetual. When we allow these capital sins a place to exist in our daily lives we are existing in a similar, if not identical, kind of unfaithfulness to God.

Jeremiah 2:12–13

[12] Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD,
[13] for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. (ESV)

Why do you think Christians struggle in long-term relationships with sin?

Our God and Our Sin: Affections and War

We don't make war with sin to earn salvation.

As Christians, our pursuit of righteousness often becomes distorted. So often we hold to salvation through faith alone and then try and reestablish some sort of righteousness through works. Paul admonished the Galatians for this.

Galatians 3:1–3

[1] O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. [2] Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? [3] Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (ESV)

Paul also speaks to the issue of Salvation by grace alone is no reason for ignoring our sin.

Romans 6-8

Sin that grace may abound? NO! Sin has no hold on you. So that you can now walk by the Spirit in righteousness. You are free to behave righteously. So do.

God has freed us through Christ to walk in righteousness.

Colossians 3:1–10

[1] If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [2] Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. [3] For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4] When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

[5] Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. [6] On account of these the wrath of God is coming. [7] In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. [8] But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. [9] Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices [10] and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (ESV)

See a few of the 7DS: Anger, lust, envy.

Ephesians 4:17–24

[17] Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. [18] They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their

hardness of heart. [19] They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. [20] But that is not the way you learned Christ!—[21] assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, [22] to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, [23] and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (ESV)

7DS: Sloth

What motivates you to fight sin and pursue holiness?

How has God given you success in this battle over time?

We must plead for the Spirit to do surgery on our hearts, revealing sin by the word (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). We must lean on close Christian friends who know us well and can help us repent, confess, and believe in the goodness and lovingkindness of Christ our Savior (James 5:16; Titus 3:3–7). Most of all, we must remember that those who trust in Christ Jesus are no longer under sin’s domain, but under the reign of Christ (Rom. 5:12–21; 8:1–4).

“Killjoys” Ryan Griffith

“Christianity is not merely or even mainly about correcting your bad habits, but about satisfying and fulfilling you in the deepest way possible, and therefore making God look as great as he is. Our hearts were designed to enjoy a full and forever happiness, not the pitiful temporary pleasures for which we’re too prone to settle. Pride, envy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust are all woefully inadequate substitutes for the wonder, beauty, and affection of God.”

“Killjoys” Marshall Segal

This class will ultimately be about how we replace lesser affections with greater affections. Next week we will begin with a sin that we are all familiar with even if we can’t always identify it.