

Now that I am a Christian, how do I put off sinful ways and put godly ways in their place?  
-----  
Examine yourself and select a known, current sinful habit, behavior, thought pattern, fear, compelling desire, compulsion, or addiction to put out of your life so that it no longer enslaves you or drives you to repeated sinful actions.

Don't know of any?

Ask God to show you, while at the same time...

Select/meditate on behavior-specific scriptures.

Consider current criticism from others.

Examine recurring conflicts, anger, fears, passions, activities you suspect are wrong.

Ask those nearest/dearest for suggestions (*spouse, children, friend, extended family, co-worker*).

Ask someone more mature for help in identifying an area needing change.

Know one, but don't want to work on it.

Ask God to help you want to change, while at the same time...

Thoroughly examine the short-term/long-term consequences of your known sin on God, His purposes, and your relationship with God, family, work, church.

Develop a plan to replace your unwillingness with an eagerness to change while at the same time... overriding your unwillingness with self-discipline.

Look for an accountability partner.

Can't pick, don't know where to start, feel overwhelmed, there are too many.

Ask God to show you where to start, while at the same time...

Look for root sins that feed other areas of sin.

Look for a controlling sin such as an addictive, compulsive, automatic, repetitive sin.

Look for sin(s) that do some damage to your dearest/nearest relationships (*God, spouse, children, extended family, co-workers*).

Ask someone more mature for help in identifying a root sin.

As much as possible, identify why the sin you have chosen is sin, and therefore evil, offensive to God, hurtful to others, and spiritually harmful to you, your relationship with God, and any other relationships.  
The goal is to become convinced this particular evil/sin must be removed and replaced with godliness.

Not sure? Not convinced?  
What does the Bible say about this sin?

Can't find any scriptures that clearly identifies it as sin.

Does it strengthen or weaken your relationship with God?  
If so, how?

Does it pass the love test?  
(*love God, love others*)

Not sure?

If not, why not?  
Are you seeking your good/happiness at the expense of others?  
Is some fear driving self-protection at the expense of others?

Ask God to make it clear why it is wrong or how it harms your relationship with Him, while at the same time...

Still not sure?  
Ask someone more mature to help you identify why your sin is offensive to God, unloving toward others, spiritually harmful to you.

Ask those directly effected what this behavior does to them and your relationship with them  
(*do they feel loved/unloved, cared for/used, respected/disrespected, etc.*).

Not convinced.  
Yet I know the Bible clearly identifies it as sin.

Ponder the language the Bible uses to describe your sin and its effect on others.

What does the continued practice of this sin say about the value you place on God vs. your own happiness/sense of well-being?  
Why have you loved this sin more than God and those nearest/dearest to you?

In other words, what selfish benefits do you gain from committing this sin?

How has this sin given the devil a greater hold on your life? Does the practice of this sin feed other sins or fears or distrust of God? If so, what are they and what does the Bible say about them?

Ponder this sin's affect on your spiritual health, conscience, integrity, love for God, reputation as a Christian, family, workplace, community, church.

List the reasons why you should hate this sin and remove it from your life.

Determine which godly character quality, value, thought pattern, kind of speech, or behavior is to replace the sin you are putting off.

What does the Bible say?

It is important to use scriptures that speak to you, and will be meaningful in setting your direction God-ward, and in fighting against the temptation to return to your sin.

Memorize one or several verses that speak to what you are putting off, and to what godliness you are putting in its place.

During the day, recall your chosen scripture, meditate on it, ponder what God is saying to you through it, and use it to nurture and strengthen godly thinking so you are better prepared for times of temptation and testing.

When tempted, use your chosen scripture to resist the temptation. Use it to remind yourself what God says about your sin, and what God wants you to put in its place. And use it to affirm the direction you ought to go, why you are choosing to go there in the moment, and why you are committed to continue going there.

Not Sure?

Ask God to show you from the scriptures what godly behavior should replace your old sinful behavior.  
Ask someone more mature for help in identifying a replacement behavior.  
Ponder what love would require of you.  
Ask yourself how you would want to be treated, while at the same time ...

Use a book like Nave's Topical Bible to look up potential scriptures that speak to what you are putting off and what you should put in its place. It is important to use scriptures that  
(1) speak to you,  
(2) will be meaningful in setting your direction God-ward,  
(3) will motivate you in your fight against the temptation to return to your sin.

Count the cost and the gain.

Consider the cost to your self-life and felt-needs of what you are giving up/dying to.  
Consider the gain of becoming godly in this area of your life and weigh it against not changing.

Possible immediate and future cost to your self-life of changing.

1. The loss of familiar/desired privileges and personal benefits due to dying to self and selfishness, and putting on godliness.
2. The loss of sinful yet self-soothing thoughts, behaviors, pleasures, comforts, feelings of security, and happiness in the face of circumstances that trigger your felt-need to practice your sin.
3. Having to repeatedly use self-discipline (*force yourself against your inner inclinations*) to persevere in not doing what you know is wrong, and do what you know is right.
4. The daily burden of hard, even fatiguing efforts required to put off sin and put on godliness – such as daily preparation, guarding thoughts, and vigilance against temptation.
5. Times of uncertainty (*quality of life*) and lack of clarity (*what to do*) as you go from the known (*life with the sin*) to the unknown (*godliness in that area of life*).
6. Times of frustration, disappointment, discouragement as you experience the setbacks of returning to your old, sinful way (*i.e., two steps forward, one step backwards*).
7. Possible loss of current happiness in your closest relationships, because when you change, the sin(s) of those nearest to you becomes more evident, and sometimes they won't change.
8. Possible loss of acceptance, respect, status, job advancement, job, friends, freedom, and even your life.

Gain to you and your spiritual-life of changing.

1. A growing sense of security in knowing you are making an honest effort to please Him who made you, saved you, provides for you, protects you, loves you, and requires godliness of you.
2. Growth in hungering and thirsting for righteousness, wanting to please God, and wanting to value God above all else.
3. Growth in (1) personal integrity leading to living up to what you know, (2) honest self-assessment leading to honest self-judgment, (3) godly thinking leading to single-mindedness, (4) clearer vision for discerning right from wrong, (5) increased prayer leading to intimate communion with God, (6) a broken and contrite heart over sin leading to a heartfelt sadness along with tears as you talk to God about it, (7) memorizing and meditating on God's word.
4. Growth in trust of God to the point of a settled confidence in God.
5. Growth in wanting to fellowship with God – which is now made possible by the kind of godly life that enables intimate fellowship.
6. Growth in loving God leading to willingly making all other loves subservient to your love for God.
7. Improvement in all your relationships, at least from your side.
8. Growth toward Christian maturity, emotional stability, inner peace, godly wisdom, discernment, witnessing, and understanding the meaning and intent of God's word.
9. Noticeable decrease in self-inflicted problems and difficult times.

### Daily Preparation

Beneficial preparation requires a daily time to equip yourself to persevere in putting off your sin and putting godliness in its place, and prepare yourself for the temptations to return to doing what you are putting off.

1. While working this method/process, talk to God – not in a formal prayer kind of way, but in a conversational way, with three general goals in mind: **(1)** to give Him the clear message you want Him involved in the whole process, **(2)** to nurture an awareness of His continual presence and assistance, and **(3)** to develop the kind of prayer life whereby you are eager to talk with Him as often as possible.
2. Tell God, in detail, what you know about the sinful behavior you are putting off and the godly behavior you are putting on. This will promote honesty with God, honesty with yourself, and the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to help you think/see beyond your current understanding.
3. Review what God says about your sin and why you ought to hate it. Review both the actual and possible consequences of continuing in your sin. Review why replacing your sin with godliness is the right choice. This will nurture **(1)** hatred for your sin, **(2)** a conviction-driven longing to change, **(3)** a heartfelt desire to please God, **(4)** perseverance, **(5)** a loving concern for others.
4. Review the costs involved of putting off your sin. Affirm your willingness to pay the price. Review the spiritual, relationship, and overall life-changing gains/benefits of pursuing godliness. This will reinforce the foolishness of sin and the wisdom of godliness.
5. Ask God to speak to you as you review your chosen scripture(s). Then as you ponder/meditate on it, talk with God about its implications for you and your situation. As new insights come, respond accordingly. Affirm, to God, your strong longing to live according to His word.
6. Talk to God about your desire, need of desire, or lack of desire to love Him supremely, love others as you ought (*be specific*), be holy as He is holy, and have a pure heart. Affirm you want to do this for His sake and the sake of His kingdom here on earth. Affirm your need for His continued help.
7. Review yesterday's failures and successes. If you have not confessed and made the failure right, do so. Then tell God what you should have done to prevent the failure. Build on the failures/victories by looking ahead at your day to predict probable times of temptation and testing. Then review with God how you intend to handle the temptation(s) and time(s) of testing.
8. Remind God that you not only need His help, you want His help – in all facets of the process. Talk to God about what you think you need from Him to make progress (*but do not ask Him to do your part for you*). Ask God to clearly show you what prior thoughts or activities set you up (*makes you vulnerable*) to give in to temptation when it arrives. Ask God to increase your sensitivity to thinking patterns, practices, choices, and circumstances which either hinder or help you along the way.
9. Thank God for all He has done to save you from the power and practice of sin. Thank Him for His gracious assistance in working His method for growing in godliness. Affirm your confidence in His continued grace and help as you continue to work the process.

## Fighting The Foe Until Victory Is Won

1. Remain vigilant so as to guard against any thought, desire, fear, or activity which weakens your resolve to do what you know is right or strengthens your desire to do what you know is wrong.
2. Nurture a healthy fear of God so that when your love for God or your love for others or your hunger for righteousness stops motivating you, your fear of God will push you to persevere in working God's sanctification method and continue pursuing growth in godliness.
3. When temptation is knocking at your door, begin resisting by quoting your chosen scripture. Then remind yourself why this sin is wrong, what the destructive consequences are of doing it, and the wisdom and benefits of doing what is godly. Then tell God you are counting on His help as you redirect your thoughts and actions (*may include changing your circumstances*) away from the temptation and toward remaining faithful to doing what you know is right. Repeat as often as necessary.
4. If you give in to temptation or simply choose to do what you are trying to put off, take the following action as soon as you come to your senses: **(1)** confess, **(2)** make things right with whomever you sinned against, **(3)** review why you want to change, **(4)** affirm to God your determination to change, **(5)** return to a serious, intentional, persistent pursuit of godliness.
5. As your understanding increases of how deeply the sin is rooted within you, how much you have treasured the (*so-called*) benefits of the sin, and how challenging and seemingly unending (*at least at first*) the battle is to put off your sin and replace it with godliness, **than** increase your "help me" and "teach me" prayers for wisdom, for inward spiritual strength, for a heartfelt hatred of your sin, for clarity in how and when you are setting yourself up to give in when tempted, for a growing desire to love God supremely, for an increased longing to be holy as God is holy, and for a pure heart.
6. Look for an accountability partner who will ask the tough questions, tell you the truth, and call you back to godliness – especially in those times when you would rather feed your flesh, give way to self-pity, take a vacation from the hard work of pursuing godliness, or give up.
7. As much as it depends on you, do not give up. Fight the good fight. Run with endurance. Persevere to the end! An established pattern of sin gets established because you have practiced it for a long time. It will take time to kill it off and replace it with godliness. So plan on the probability that it will take three months to a year or more to gain the kind of victory whereby you are a new creature in Christ Jesus in that area of your life. The goal is to get to the place where all desire is gone for the old way and godliness has become your natural choice.
8. Throughout the battle and until victory is won, be vigilant in guarding against wrong thinking and feeling, against fleshly desires that feed the sin, against self-pity or anger that make it easy to justify the sin, and against temptation. For a period of time after victory is won, you will need to continue being extra vigilant in relation to the sin just defeated so as to prevent it from returning.
9. When victory has been won or nearly won in one area of sin, start the process again on another sinful behavior, thought pattern, fleshly desire, or fear. However, remain vigilant against past defeated sins until you no longer have any desire to do them.