CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

Kansas City, Missouri

A SIX-DAY DEVOTIONAL

I Believe I Have a Parasite:

Confronting the Hidden Flaws That Feed on God's Purpose

SUCCESSFUL BIBLICAL LIVING — PART 4

ANCHOR SCRIPTURE · JAMES 1:14–15 (NIV)

"But each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

Based on the message by Dr. Stan Archie

Proverbs 6:16–19 · James 1:14–15

Dr. Stan Archie

Senior Pastor & Co-Founder

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 1, 2026

DAY ONE

SOMETHING ELSE IS LIVING: THE PARASITE IN THE LETTUCE

SCRIPTURE READING

PROVERBS 6:16–19 (NIV)

There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie opened with a story from the grocery aisle. This year thousands of people got sick from lettuce — and the lettuce was not the problem. It looked fresh and healthy. But a parasite had gotten into it while it was still growing in the field, rode it all the way to the kitchen table, and when the lettuce was eaten, the parasite simply moved on to something else that was alive. A parasite treats its host as if it had been invited. It attaches, feeds on what was meant to nourish the host, drains its energy, interferes with normal function, and sometimes begins to reproduce inside it, raising a whole family where it was never welcome.

Then he named what many of us have been carrying: spiritual parasites. This is why the week's conviction matters so much. Successful biblical living requires confronting the sinful desires and character flaws that hinder God's purpose for our lives. Many of us sincerely want to do what God wants. We simply have not been willing to clean up on the inside.

> ***"Spiritual parasites are character flaws that take root in us. They feed on us, weaken us, corrupt our thinking, influence our behavior, and progressively interfere with God's purpose for our lives."***
>
> *— Dr. Stan Archie*

Proverbs 6 is a diagnostic list, sobering in its specificity. Here the Lord names seven things He hates — attitudes and actions so offensive to Him that they hang in the air of the relationship. Dr. Archie asked whether we have ever done the one thing our spouse cannot stand and then tried to start a pleasant conversation. Don't say anything to me right now. The relationship has not ended, but the conversation has changed. If prayer feels thin and heaven feels quiet, it is worth asking whether we are hosting something God hates.

Notice what is on the list. Only one item is a hand that does violence. The rest are eyes, a tongue, a heart, feet, a witness, a temperament. God begins His list where parasites begin — on the inside, in places that look healthy from the outside.

This week is not about shame; it is about health. You cannot treat what you will not name. Over the next six days we will hold our lives up to this list one piece at a time. Begin today with one honest question before your next meal: Lord, what is living in me that You never invited?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *If I am honest, which item on the Proverbs 6 list do I most quickly assume does not apply to me — and what might that quick dismissal be protecting?*

2. *Where does something in my life look healthy from the outside — a habit, a role, a relationship — while something inside it has been quietly draining my energy or my joy?*

3. *If a parasite in me were finally removed, what would I expect to change in how I pray, how I serve, or how I treat the people closest to me?*

4. *What is one hidden attitude I will name before God this week by writing it down, rather than leaving it unnamed and well fed?*

DAY TWO

THE DEVIL DIDN'T MAKE ME DO IT: DRAGGED AWAY BY MY OWN DESIRE

SCRIPTURE READING

JAMES 1:13–15 (NIV)

When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie took us back to Saturday-night television in the 1970s, when a comedian's best-loved character had one answer for every bad decision: the devil made me do it. A whole culture has been repeating some version of it ever since. Dr. Archie suggested we retire the line and try a more honest confession: I believe I have a parasite.

James will not let us blame anyone else. Each person is tempted when dragged away by their own desire — not some people, not the weak ones, each person. Nothing outside of me tempts me. Something outside of me triggers a desire already inside me, and I answer the trigger by being enticed. The driver doing twenty on a seventy-mile-an-hour highway is not tempting me, Dr. Archie said, but he is certainly triggering something. The faithful response is to learn from him: I did not know that was still in me. I thought I had dealt with that long ago. In that sense, the slow driver did me a favor.

That is the gift of the trigger. The tests a doctor runs are not designed to make you well; they are designed to show you that you are sick. What you do after the results is what makes you well. Every irritation, every flash of envy, every surge of anger is a lab result. We can argue with the report, or we can receive it as mercy.

> ***"The test is not designed to make you well. The test is designed to show you that you are sick. What you do afterward is what makes you well."***
>
> *— Dr. Stan Archie*

Dr. Archie also punctured our spiritual self-importance. Some people worry that the smart speaker in the kitchen is recording every word in the house — as if anyone had time to listen. Running a rebellion against God is a large enterprise, and the enemy is not dropping by most of our homes to eavesdrop. Unless we are pressing hard against his kingdom, he can simply let us live by the default deficiency of our own parasites. That is humbling, and it is also freeing. If the problem is inside me, the remedy is within reach of God's grace in me.

James traces the life cycle plainly: desire conceives, gives birth to sin, and sin, full-grown, gives birth to death. Parasites multiply when they are fed. This week, when something triggers you, pause long enough to ask what the test just revealed — and starve the desire before it conceives.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *When something goes wrong in my day, how quickly do I reach for someone or something outside myself to blame — the devil, a coworker, a driver, a family member?*

2. *What person or situation reliably triggers me, and what desire inside me does that trigger keep revealing?*

3. *If I treated my next trigger as a test result rather than an attack, what would I do differently in the first few seconds after it happens?*

4. *What desire do I recognize in the conceiving stage right now, and what concrete step will I take this week to stop feeding it before it gives birth to sin?*

DAY THREE

HAUGHTY EYES: UNAUTHORIZED FIRE

SCRIPTURE READING

LEVITICUS 10:1–3 (NIV)

Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Moses then said to Aaron, 'This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: "Among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored."' Aaron remained silent.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie began the list with haughty eyes and defined it with care. This is not simply feeling good about ourselves. It is placing ourselves in a position of authority that contradicts the role or order God has assigned — the employee convinced he is better than the supervisor the company appointed, the child acting like the parent, the student acting like the teacher. It is giving ourselves a promotion that was never written into the contract.

Leviticus 10 shows how seriously God takes it. Nadab and Abihu were Aaron's sons, raised in the house of the high priest with every advantage of proximity. They lit their censers and walked into the Lord's presence with fire He had not commanded. Dr. Archie gave voice to their attitude: I have been in church all my life. My daddy is Aaron. Get out of the way. Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them.

Under grace we have not seen fire fall in the sanctuary, and we should be grateful for that mercy. But the parasite is still among us. It is the quiet conclusion that God's arrangement is less significant, less productive, and less insightful than our own. The flaw is misplaced authority — believing we have the right to place ourselves where God did not.

The cure is realignment. Dr. Archie called us back to what this church has long confessed: God's Word is FACT, governing our thinking, our decisions, and our commitments. And here is the test that exposes haughty eyes: when something makes us uncomfortable, our first instinct is to change it. Leaving for another church because the sermon stung is not discernment; it is the parasite protecting itself.

> ***"Realign so that you are consistently adjusting to truth rather than trying to change the world around you so that you won't have to change."***
>
> *— Dr. Stan Archie*

This week, watch for the moment you feel the urge to correct, bypass, or outrank someone God has placed in authority. Before you speak, ask whose order you are defending — His, or yours.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Where in my life — at work, at home, at church — do I resist a person God has placed in authority because I privately believe I could do it better?*

2. *When truth makes me uncomfortable, what is my reflex: to adjust myself, or to change, avoid, or leave the source of the discomfort?*

3. *What would it look like this week to treat God's Word as FACT in one specific decision I would rather make on my own terms?*

4. *Is there someone whose assigned role I have been undermining, and what step of honor or submission is God asking me to take toward them?*

DAY FOUR

A LYING TONGUE: MORE COMMITTED TO TRUTH THAN TO MY FEELINGS

SCRIPTURE READING

ACTS 5:3–5 (NIV)

Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.' When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie named the second item, a lying tongue: distorting, concealing, or misrepresenting the truth to control what others believe, avoid consequences, protect our image, or gain an advantage. He gave us a test that catches us every time. If, before you answer, you are asking what will happen to you if you tell the truth, you are already in trouble. You are negotiating.

As children, he admitted, most of us made something up when a parent asked why the football was thrown in the house. But maturity means owning the broken window; grown people do not get to blame the kids. Most of our lies still come from how we feel, how we want to feel, or how we used to feel. And truth is not ours to manage. We do not have "my truth"; we have a perception of His.

Acts 5 is hard to read. Ananias and Sapphira kept back part of the money from their land, which they were free to do. Their sin was pretending they had given it all. They wanted the reputation of total generosity without its cost, and they lied to the Holy Spirit to get it. Grace has not changed God's hatred of a lying tongue. It has given us room to repent.

Some lies we no longer recognize. "Use me, Lord," we sing — while declining every invitation to serve. We post filtered versions of ourselves until, like someone who has worn contact lenses so long they forget they cannot see, we believe the image. Dr. Archie's grandfather, John L. Williams, once told him, "Your relationship with truth determines your relationship with me." He could handle a boy who acted up; he could not trust one who lied.

> ***"Once you have established yourself as a liar, people have to manage proximity rather than probability. Have you established yourself as a liar — to God? To anybody?"***
>
> *— Dr. Stan Archie*

The cure is to become more committed to truth than to protecting our feelings, managing other people's feelings, or avoiding uncomfortable consequences. This week, when you feel the pull to shade the truth, tell it — in love, but tell it.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *In what situations do I most often find myself calculating what the truth will cost me before I decide what to say?*

2. *Which of my lies come from how I feel, how I want to feel, or how I used to feel — and what am I really protecting when I tell them?*

3. *Where have I been presenting an image — online, at church, at home — that is more filtered than true, and what would it cost me to let people see what is real?*

4. *Is there a lie, an exaggeration, or a concealment I need to correct this week with God and with a specific person? When and how will I do it?*

DAY FIVE

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER? INNOCENT BLOOD AND GUILTY SILENCE

SCRIPTURE READING

GENESIS 4:8–10 (NIV)

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, 'Let's go out to the field.' While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?' 'I don't know,' he replied. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' The LORD said, 'What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.'

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie moved to the third item on God's list: hands that shed innocent blood. Most of us assume we can pass over this one quickly. But he widened it in a way none of us could dodge — causing harm to innocent people through violence, through abuse, through our actions, and sometimes through our silence. God calls His people to seek justice. When we see harm and say nothing, our silence lets it continue.

He told of a man who described, almost casually, how his wife lashed out at the children. Asked what he did about it, the man said, "Nothing. That's between them." Dr. Archie's answer was pastoral and unflinching: your silence is helping cause the harm in that child's life. Look away long enough, and the bystander becomes a participant.

Genesis 4 gives us the first murder, and it begins with an invitation: let's go out to the field. Abel went because he trusted his brother. Two went out; one came back. When God asked where Abel was, Cain answered with a lie and a shrug: am I my brother's keeper? God answered with a question that still echoes — What have you done? Harm done to the innocent does not stay buried. It cries out from the ground and reaches heaven.

Dr. Archie named the flaw beneath the bloodshed: unregulated emotion and a disregard for humanity. Cain was not injured; he was enraged that his brother was more accepted. Dr. Archie recalled a young man who took a life over a dance contest he lost, and adults who called the police on a three-year-old because he played soccer better than their children. The pattern never changes. I cannot control how I feel about him, so I will control him.

> ***"I can't control how I feel because he's better than me, so I want to control him being better than me. I want to get rid of the things outside of me so I don't have to fix the things inside of me."***
>
> *— Dr. Stan Archie*

Most of us will never raise a hand against anyone. But many of us carry resentment toward someone more gifted or more favored, and our words do quiet violence. This week, notice whom you resent, and whom you have been too silent to protect. You are your brother's keeper.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Is there someone being harmed — at home, at work, in my family or neighborhood — about whom I have stayed silent because it felt like "not my business"?*

2. *Whose success, favor, or gifting stirs something ugly in me, and how has that resentment shown up in my words or my treatment of them?*

3. *What would it look like this week to be my brother's or sister's keeper in one specific situation where I have been only a bystander?*

4. *What step will I take to protect, speak up for, or bless someone I have been tempted to resent or ignore?*

DAY SIX

WHO HIT FIRST? REGULAR MAINTENANCE FOR THE INNER LIFE

SCRIPTURE READING

1 JOHN 1:8–9 (NIV)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie remembered the trips his family took "down home" — eight people packed into one car for an eight-hour drive south. Nobody touched that car all year. Then, right before the trip, came the ritual: wash it, check the tires that had been half-flat for months, crawl underneath with a bucket and change the oil. Families who skipped the preparation often ended up stranded on a back road with no phone. Many of us, he said, live the Christian life that way — we spruce up when God calls, neglect the regular maintenance, and break down halfway through the ministry.

Regular maintenance begins with John's plain truth: if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves. Dr. Archie put it in terms anyone recognizes. When two people fight, someone asks who hit first, because it takes two to make a fight. An argument never started between you and you. And if the last twenty people you clashed with were all wrong, the common denominator may be you.

> ***"If you say you have no responsibility, that is a prideful element hindering your growth — because if you think you're already fixed, you won't get better."***
>
> *— Dr. Stan Archie*

That is why the cure for unregulated emotion is not willpower. "I'm just not going to be mad" rarely survives the next provocation. Dr. Archie, who has spent decades helping people heal, was direct: if something makes you mad, it is going to make you mad — get some help. Our emotions should be governed by how God sees people, as image-bearers to protect rather than obstacles to remove, and that kind of regulation is usually learned with others: a counselor, a mentor, a small group, a trusted friend.

Here is the good news John holds out: if we confess, He is faithful and just to forgive and to purify. God does not merely pardon the parasite; He cleanses the host. Dr. Archie closed Sunday praying that we would see the mirror God holds in front of us, because most of what feeds on us is as invisible as the parasite in that lettuce.

So schedule the maintenance. Name one flaw, confess it, ask for help with it, and let God make you whole for the road ahead.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Is my spiritual life kept up through regular maintenance, or do I mostly scramble to "spruce up" when an assignment, a crisis, or a holiday arrives?*

2. *In my recurring conflicts, what part have I been unwilling to own — and what pattern would I see if I looked honestly at the last several?*

3. *Which parasite from this week — misplaced authority, a lying tongue, unregulated emotion, silent complicity — most needs outside help, and whom could I ask?*

4. *Which one flaw will I confess to God and share with one trusted person this week, and when will I have that conversation?*

CLOSING PRAYER

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 1, 2026

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, we came to You thinking we were healthy. We looked fine. We sounded fine. We showed up, we sang, we served. But You have shown us that something else has been living in us — feeding on what You meant for our nourishment, draining what You meant for our purpose. We confess that there are things in us that You hate, and we have hosted them as though they had been invited.

Forgive us for blaming everyone but ourselves. We have said the devil made us do it when we were dragged away by our own desires. Thank You for every trigger that exposes what is still in us. Teach us to read the test results as mercy and not as attack, and give us the courage to starve what we have been feeding before it conceives and grows.

Humble our haughty eyes. Where we have promoted ourselves past the order You established, where we have offered unauthorized fire and called it zeal, bring us back under Your authority. Let Your Word be FACT in our thinking, our decisions, and our commitments. When truth makes us uncomfortable, change us before we try to change everything around us.

Purify our tongues. We have negotiated with the truth, filtered our image, and told ourselves lies so long we believed them. Make us more committed to truth than to our feelings, our comfort, or our reputation. Make our relationship with truth the kind that lets others trust us — and lets us walk honestly with You.

Lord, You hear the blood that cries from the ground. Forgive us for the resentment we have nursed against those You have favored, and for the silence we have kept when the innocent were harmed. Govern our emotions by Your view of every person You have made. Make us our brothers' and sisters' keepers — protectors, not bystanders.

We do not want to be stranded halfway through the assignment You have given us. Hold Your mirror before us. Where we have claimed to be without sin, we confess it now, and we trust You to be faithful and just to forgive and to purify. Send us into this week cleaned out, honest, accountable, and available — healthy hosts for Your Spirit and Your purpose. In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.