

## Romans Session 103

### Life in the Spirit 7

*Romans 8:12-13 (NASB)*

<sup>12</sup> *So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—*

<sup>13</sup> *for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

In our last study we saw the partial list of sins that a Christian should kill, that are open and operative in the life.

*Colossians 3:5 (NASB)*

<sup>5</sup> *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.*

*Colossians 3:6-10 (NASB)*

<sup>6</sup> *For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,*

<sup>7</sup> *and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.*

<sup>8</sup> *But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.*

<sup>9</sup> *Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,*

<sup>10</sup> *and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—*

Paul is not suggesting the “*Let go and let God*” Philosophy that is promoted by groups and leaders who advocate a so-called deeper life, in which one progressively rises to higher and higher levels of spirituality until sin and even temptation is virtually absent.

That is not the kind of spiritual life Paul promises or that he personally experienced, as he testified so movingly to in Romans 7.

As long as a believer is in his earthly body, he will be subject to the perils of the flesh and will need to keep putting its sins to death.

Only in heaven will his need for practical sanctification end.

Until then, all believers are admonished to put sin to death and to live in and for their new Sovereign, the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Romans 6:3-11 (NASB)*

<sup>3</sup> *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?*

<sup>4</sup> *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

<sup>5</sup> *For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,*

<sup>6</sup> *knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;*

<sup>7</sup> *for he who has died is freed from sin.*

<sup>8</sup> *Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,*

<sup>9</sup> *knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.*

<sup>10</sup> *For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*

<sup>11</sup> *Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

The puritan, John Owen warned that “*sin is never less quiet than when it seems to be most quiet, and its waters are for the most part deep when they are still.*” (cf. *Sin and Temptation* [Portland, Ore.: Multnomah 1983, p. 21].)

Satan is likely to attach when a believer is most satisfied with his spiritual life. That is when pride, the chief of sins, easily sneaks into our lives unnoticed and leads us to believe that contentment with ourselves is contentment in God.

Scripture offers believers many helps for avoiding and killing sin in their lives.

**The first way to kill sin in one's life** is to recognize the presence of sin in our flesh.

We must be willing to confess honestly with Paul when he said;

*Romans 7:21 (NASB)*

*<sup>21</sup> I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.*

If we do not admit to sin, we delude ourselves and become still more susceptible to its influence.

Sin can become a powerful and destructive force in a believer's life if it is not recognized and put to death.

Our remaining humanness is constantly ready to drag us back into the sinful ways of our life before Christ.

Knowing that truth well, Peter admonishes;

*1 Peter 2:11 (NASB)*

*<sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.*

If Christians did not live in constant danger from sin, such advice would be pointless.

But because of the influence of our human weaknesses and limitations on our thinking, it is often under the guise of something that seems trivial or insignificant, even righteous and good.

And so, we must pray as did David;

*Psalms 139:23-24 (NASB)*

*<sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;*

*<sup>24</sup> And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.*

Haggai's counsel to ancient Israel is helpful for believers in any age;

*Haggai 1:5-7 (NASB)*

*<sup>5</sup> Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways!"*

*<sup>6</sup> "You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes."*

*<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways!"*

**The second way to kill sin in our lives,** is to have a heart fixed on God.

David said;

*Psalms 57:7 (NASB)*

*<sup>7</sup> My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises!*

Another Psalmist testifies;

*Psalm 119:5-6 (NASB)*

<sup>5</sup> *Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!*

<sup>6</sup> *Then I shall not be ashamed When I look upon all Your commandments.*

In other words, when we know and obey God's Word, we are building up both our defenses and offenses against sin.

**The third way to kill sin in our lives,** is to meditate on God's Word.

Many of the Lord's truths become clear only when we patiently immerse ourselves in a passage of scripture and give the Lord opportunity to give us deeper understanding.

David gives us the example with these words;

*Psalm 119:11 (NASB)*

<sup>11</sup> *Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.*

**The fourth way to kill sin in our lives,** is to commune regularly with God in prayer.

Peter calls us to;

*1 Peter 4:7b (NASB)*

<sup>7</sup> *be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.*

When we are faithful in these disciplines we discover how interrelated they are. It is often difficult to tell where study of God's word ends and meditation on it begins, and where meditation ends, and prayer begins.

It should be emphasized that true prayer must always have an element of confession.

Although we have the assurance that we belong to God and are free from condemnation, we also know that we can never come before him completely sinless.

*1 John 1:8-10 (NASB)*

<sup>8</sup> *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

<sup>9</sup> *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

<sup>10</sup> *If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*

The writer of Hebrews admonishes;

*Hebrews 4:16 (NASB)*

<sup>16</sup> *Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

We need to be cleansed every time we come to Him.

Sincere prayer has a way of unmasking sin's deceit. When God's children open their minds and hearts to their Heavenly Father, He lovingly reveals sins that otherwise would go unnoticed.

**The fifth way to put to death sin in our lives,** is to practice obedience to God. Doing His will and His will alone in all the small issues of life can be training in habits that will hold up in the severe times of temptations.

Paul has already shown us that putting to death sin is often difficult, slow, and frustrating.

Satan is the great adversary of God's people and will make every effort to drag them down into sin.

But as they conquer sin in their lives through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, they not only are brought nearer to their heavenly Father but attain ever increasing assurance that they are indeed His children and are eternally secure in Him.

When the New Testament speaks of such things as growing in grace, perfecting holiness, and renewing the inner man, it is referring to putting sin to death.

Sin produced by the remaining flesh in which believers remain temporarily bound is all that stands between them and perfect godliness.

Paul assures Christians that they have power for victory over the sinful flesh that still clings to them in this life.

Apart from the Spirit's supernatural power, we could never succeed in putting to death the recurring sin in our lives.

If we were left to our own resources, the struggle with sin would be simply flesh trying to overcome flesh. Humanness trying to conquer humanness.

Even as a Christian, Paul lamented;

***Romans 7:18 (NASB)***

***<sup>18</sup> For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.***

Without the Holy Spirit, a Christian would have no more power to resist and defeat sin than does an unbeliever.

The Holy Spirit is virtually synonymous with divine power.

***Acts 1:8 (NASB)***

***<sup>8</sup> but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."***

Later in his account of the early church, Luke reports;

***Acts 10:38 (NASB)***

***<sup>38</sup> "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.***

In his gospel, Luke relates the angel's announcement to Mary concerning the divine conception and birth of Jesus and he says;

***Luke 1:35 (NASB)***

***<sup>35</sup> The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.***

The Prophet Micah wrote;

***Micah 3:8 (NASB)***

***<sup>8</sup> On the other hand I am filled with power— With the Spirit of the LORD— And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin.***

And then when it came to rebuilding the Temple;

***Zechariah 4:6 (NASB)***

***<sup>6</sup> Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.***

Paul's main point in Romans 8:13 is that, by the power of the Spirit who dwells in them, Christians are able successfully to resist and destroy sin in their lives.

***2 Corinthians 10:4 (NASB)***

***<sup>4</sup> for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.***

It is such confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit that gives hope to the frustration Paul expressed in Romans 7:24-25, a frustration that every Christian faces, from time to time.

Being controlled by God's Spirit comes from being obedient to His Word.

The Spirit filled life does not come through mystical or ecstatic experiences but from studying and submitting oneself to the Scripture.

As a believer faithfully and submissively saturates his mind and heart with God's truth, his Spirit controlled behavior will follow as surely as night follows day.

When we are filled with God's truth and led by His Spirit, even our involuntary reactions, those that happen when we don't have time to consciously decide what to do or say will be godly.

This brings victory over sin in our lives. We can live victorious day by day. Led by and empowered by, and taught by His Spirit.