

are children of God (**verse 16**). Mortification begins with the gospel, purifying our hearts by faith (**Acts 15:9**). It is the love of Christ that constraineth us to follow the Lord (**II Corinthians 5:14**). It was the Spirit of God that gave the early church overcoming victory as they began to carry out the great commission (**Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-18**). Another author put it this way, *“The Spirit alone brings the cross of Christ into our hearts with its sin-killing power.”*

Conclusion

Mortification is a daily duty that will continue throughout the Christian’s life. As long as we dwell in these sinful bodies there will be warfare. We must do battle with the flesh by the Spirit. *“Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world”* (**I John 4:4**). Our strength and power is in the Lord (**Ephesians 6:10; Zechariah 4:6; II Corinthians 12:9**). God has not only saved us, but has given us the power to be victorious and overcome sin. The Christian is truly an overcomer in Christ Jesus, **I John 5:4-5**, *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

“Sin sets its strength against every act of holiness and every degree we grow to. Let not that man think he makes any progress in holiness who walks not over the bellies of his lust.”

- John Owen

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Colossians 3:5



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*“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”*
Acts 16:31

The RICHIES

OF GRACE

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"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Mortification

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Romans 8:13

+ Mortifying Sin +

The doctrine of mortification for the Christian is clearly seen and taught in the New Testament. The mortification of sin in our life as a believer is a must. This Biblical doctrine shows us why and how to mortify sin. Many today justify sin, make excuses for it, and joke about it to escape its reality. The Christian is called upon to mortify the deeds of the body. This is to be our occupation as a child of God. As one author plainly said, “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.”

“The choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.”

- John Owen

This article will consider three areas of mortification of sin: the meaning, the motive, and the method. May God's leading be in our hearts as we approach this important subject.

THE MEANING OF MORTIFICATION

The word *mortify* is used in **Colossians 3:5** and basically means to put to death, "*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*" It carries the idea to crucify, destroy, subdue, or to bring into subjection. Sin is our enemy and we are called upon as a believer to kill it, stop it, that is, nip it in the bud. We are to war against it and give it no quarters. Sin must not be allowed to rule and reign in our lives as Christians. Therefore, we have a duty to deal with it. In the book of **Colossians** there is a doctrinal foundation laid in the first two chapters in reference to our position in Christ as saints of God. Beginning in **chapter three**, there is the practical aspect of our salvation. This is important to know because many try to build a life without a foundation. The text is speaking to Christians and in **verse five**, we are to mortify our members which are upon earth, and then a list of sins is given.

In **Colossians 3:8-14**, we are told to put off certain sinful habits and put on godly habits. On one side there is the negative, that is, the elimination of what is bad, and on the other side the cultivation of what is good. The old man (with his deeds) is contrasted with the new man, which is created in the image of God. Again, every Christian's duty is to mortify sin in his life.

THE MOTIVE FOR MORTIFICATION

The motive for mortifying sin is regeneration. That is, we have entered into a state of salvation upon conversion. We have been saved not only from eternal judgment, but from our sins (**Titus 2:14**). According to **Galatians 5:24**, Christians have crucified the flesh, "*And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*" This happened at conversion and is ongoing, for every believer who has repented and renounced the life of sin. The flesh is crucified in the sense that it no longer reigns over us or holds us in bondage. The Christian is not dominated by the old nature. The context (**verses 16-23**) gives a list of the works of the flesh that is characteristic of the unregenerate, and also, a list of the fruit of the Spirit that is characteristic of the regenerate.

In **Ephesians 4:17-32**, there is also a comparison between the believer

and the non-believer. The believer again is commanded to put off the deeds of the old man and put on the the new man. In **Romans 13:14**, we are told to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. The context (**verses 8-14**) is speaking of mortifying sin in our lives as Christians. This mortification is also spoken of in **Romans chapter six**. The beginning of the chapter (**verses 1-10**) speaks of our position in Christ, showing that we are dead to sin through His accomplishments on Calvary's Cross. In **verse six**, our old man is crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed, and in **verse 7**, we are freed from sin. In **verse 11**, we are to reckon these things to be so, and in **verse 12**, we are told to not let sin reign in our mortal body. The remainder of the chapter (**verses 13-23**) compares our former life before conversion with our Christian life. Our Christian life is marked by obedience to God through the power of His grace.

THE METHOD OF MORTIFICATION

According to **Romans 8:13**, the method of mortification is through the Spirit, "*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*" It is important that we understand that mortification of sin can only be accomplished through the Holy Spirit. Trying to do this in the flesh will only bring frustration, self-righteousness, and legalism. There are many so-called self-helps in the secular world and also in the evangelical circles. But none of these really deal with the root problem, that is, the heart. We hear a lot of hype today that you can be anything you want to be and sayings such as, "Let go and let God." But, God said it is through the Spirit that we live for Him. There are many books, CD's, etc. that are sold today showing you how to live the higher life, but God said it is through the Spirit. Many run from this conference to that seminar to find answers, but God said only by the Holy Ghost.

Romans chapter eight is a great chapter, and is the high water mark of the book, beginning with no condemnation and ending with no separation. In between, all things work for good to them who love God and are called according to His purpose (**verse 28**). Great emphasis is put on the Spirit of God in this chapter (**verses 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 23, and 26**). The Spirit is mentioned in **verse 13** because of His presence and work in the believer, and it is the mark of true Christianity. We are to exercise this power that is within us, for it is God's way for the Christian to have victory in his life. In **verse 11**, it is the Spirit that quickens our mortal bodies, the same Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead. It is the Spirit that leads us (**verse 14**) and beareth witness that we