

Lesson 7 – Putting Sin to Death (Chapter 9)

God has made provision for our holiness and He has also given us a responsibility for it. As we have studied in the preceding chapters, by tapping into the power of the Holy Spirit to live according to our new nature and reckoning our death to sin’s reign, we are to *put to death* the misdeeds of the body (Romans 8:13). What does the expression *put to death* mean? The KJV uses the term “mortify”. To *mortify* means “to destroy the strength, vitality or functioning of; to subdue or deaden.” To put to death the misdeeds of the body, then, is to destroy the strength and vitality of sin as it tries to reign in our bodies. This is done through the strength and under the direction of the Holy Spirit...but it is something we must do.

Conviction

First, we must have **conviction**. We must be persuaded that a holy life is God’s will for every Christian. These convictions are developed through the exposure to God’s Word. Even after we become Christians, the world around us constantly seeks to conform us to its value system (Romans 12:1-2). We are bombarded on every side by temptations to indulge our sinful nature.

- Obedience is the pathway to holiness (John 14:21)
- Memorizing Scripture is one of the most effective ways to influence our minds (Psalm 119:9-11)
- The goal of memorization is the application of the Scripture to our daily lives (Psalm 119:105)

The Bible clearly tells us God’s standard in most actions and decisions in our lives. But what about issues and areas that are not specifically mentioned in Scripture?

A recommended formula from the book taken from I Corinthians 6:12, 8:13, 10:31):

- “Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial” (6:12) – *Question #1 – Is it helpful – physically, spiritually, emotionally and/or mentally?*
- “Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be mastered (brought under the power of) by anything” (6:12) – *Question #2 – Does it bring me under its power?*
- “Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall” (8:13) – *Question #3 – Does it hurt others?*
- “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (10:31) – *Question #4 – Does it glorify God?*

Question #3 usually causes some consternation with believers. What if my convictions differ from those of other Christians? Paul speaks to this issue in Romans 14. He lays down three general principles:

- The first is we are not to judge those whose convictions are different than ours (Romans 14:1-4)
- The second principle is that whatever our convictions are, they must be *to the Lord*, developed out of a sense of obedience to Him (Romans 14:5-8)
- Finally, whatever convictions we have developed as part of our obedience to His leading, we must be true to them (Romans 14:14, 23)

The ultimate question is are we willing to develop convictions from the Scriptures and then live according to those convictions?

Commitment

So it follows that the second quality we must develop, if we are to put to death the misdeeds of the body, is **commitment**. We must honestly face the question, “Am I willing to give up whatever the Holy Spirit convicts me of in order to live a life of holiness?” (Luke 14:13, Luke 9:23).

It is at this point of commitment that many of us fail. We prefer to “dally” with sin, play with it a little, without getting too deeply involved. However, we must recognize that we have developed habit patterns of sin. These habits must be broken, but they never will be until we make a basic commitment to a life of holiness *without exceptions*.

The apostle John clearly stated what the goal of everyone Christian should be – ***not to sin*** (1 John 2:1). If we examine our hearts, we may find out that our real aim is to *not sin very much*. Can you imagine a soldier going into battle with the goal of not getting shot very much? Ridiculous, eh? His goal is not to get hit at all! If we have not made a commitment to holiness without exception, we are just like a soldier who is hoping not to get hit very much. We can be sure that we will be hit – by temptation – over and over again. There is no point in praying for “victory” over temptation if we are not willing to make a commitment to say no to it (Titus 2:11-14). That is where personal discipline comes in.

This concludes the first part of our series (chapters 1-9) which laid the foundation for pursuing a life of holiness. In the second part (chapters 10-17), we will examine:

- The place of personal discipline
- Holiness in body
- Holiness in Spirit
- Holiness and our wills
- Developing habits of holiness
- Holiness and Faith
- Holiness in an Unholy World
- The Joy of Holiness