

has called us to be, and live in a manner worthy of Lord. Let us not forget how eager He is to help us and make us like Christ and see us live a life fully pleasing to Him.

**1 Peter 5:6-7** - 6 **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God**, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 **casting all your anxiety upon Him**, because He cares for you. NASB

**Hebrews 4:15-16** - 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, **that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need**. NASB

Let us remember that He is compassionate toward us, knowing our weaknesses fully, and always ready to heal and to help us. In the Gospel, God has ceased from His anger toward us and adopted us as His beloved children. Now He works everything for our good and does the unspeakably glorious work of making us **like Christ** and causing us to **bear His image**.

## The tension of holiness

We live in the tension of **resting in faith** and **working toward holiness**, it is our **everyday struggle**. Our position in Christ is perfect before God, (both justified and sanctified forever), but our practice is ever and always being conformed in this life to the image of Christ. We are becoming like Christ through the Word, by the Spirit. It is God's work and He has allowed us the privilege of participating in it with Him. As we have seen, **sanctification** is a **cooperative process** where we are also called to **exert effort** and **diligence** to see it come to fruition. **God works in sanctification** and **we work**. It is an ongoing **cooperative process**. God's work is primary and **our effort** is **secondary**. Therefore we are called to **God-dependent effort** throughout the New Testament. But we live in the **tension** of always striving to be holy like Christ, and yet never quite attaining it in this life. This is the **nature** of the Christian life. An ongoing recognition of this truth will help you have a **clear vision of the path and trajectory of your life** and help keep you from falling into depression and guilt when you continue to struggle with sin. We cannot forget the good news of the Gospel and the glorious perfection before God that is already our possession because of Christ. And at the same time we are striving to be like Him in all that we do. We do everything for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31) and make it our aim to be fully pleasing to Him (2 Cor 5:9). So we strive to renew our minds with happy truth of the Gospel, **resting in it by faith**. Yet at the same time **we are at war** with the world, the flesh and the devil. This is the great tension of holiness in the Christian life. We must therefore equip ourselves with the weapons of war and with battle plans ever before us, arm ourselves to fight the good fight of faith and watch as our God destroys Christ's enemies before our eyes.

**Ephesians 6:10-12** - 10 Finally, **be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might**. 11 **Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm** against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. NASB

And so God calls us to ever and always keep believing with much hope that the victory has already been won by Christ, and we will soon lie down in rest forever in God's glorious presence. For our **faith** is in the solid rock of **God's eternal promise** to us, and **sure evidence** of things not yet seen.

**Hebrews 11:1** - 1 Now **faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen**. NASB

All of the Gospel promises for temporal blessing and sanctification and perseverance are ours even now. And in the near future our hope of glory will be realized and the tension will be over. But for now we look with eager expectation, **striving for purity** of life, **yet resting** in Him.

**1 John 3:2-3** - 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, **when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is**. 3 And **everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure**. NASB

## Becoming who we are - Pursuing Holiness

Now when the New Testament calls us to the imperatives, they come to us in the form of two specific types of God dependent effort. These we call **mortification** and **vivification**, that is to “**put off**” the old nature of sin and to “**put on**” the new nature of righteousness that is already ours in Christ. These are **acts of faith, motivated by love for God** and focused on pleasing Him with our whole life as an act of worship to God. We are striving in this way to be like Christ. This matter is of such importance in the Christian life that huge portions of the New Testament are devoted to giving and explaining these imperatives. But these imperatives, as we have seen, are always grounded in the indicatives of the Gospel and our already righteous position before God because of Christ. With this in mind, let us arm ourselves with **a healthy overview of these methods of mortification and vivification**, coming to a well-rounded understanding of how we exert God dependent effort in the process of Sanctification, becoming like Christ.

## Be Killing Sin – Mortification

Now that we have been **saved** from the **power** (domination) and **curse of sin** (death), it is our **Christian duty** to continue to **walk in repentance** and forsake the **practice of sin**. We now bear the name of Christ and have been made children of God and have as our obligation and privilege to **put sin to death** in our **daily living** and to **glorify God** by the way we live our life. This **mortification** is to **put sin to death** in our living by the **power of the Spirit**. Mortification is to kill sin, to forsake it, turn from it, flee from it and put a stop to the practice of it in our hearts, minds and daily life. To mortify sin, or put the flesh (sinful nature to death) to death is an imperative commanded over and over in the New Testament. We Christians are **under obligation** to the Spirit to **kill sin** and eradicate it from our thinking and living.

**Romans 8:12-13** - 12 So then, brethren, **we are under obligation**, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 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**. NASB

Paul’s statement makes it clear that all truly born again Christians are TRULY in the process of “**putting to death the deeds of the body**.” This is because he presents the contrast of those who are in the flesh will die against those who are in fact “by the Spirit putting” sin to death. The context also bears this out.

**Romans 8:9-10** - 9 However, **you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you**. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 And **if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness**. NASB

Paul clearly states, “**you are not in the flesh**” (v-9). He means, you have been “**set free**” from sin and death (v-2), and no longer have your “**minds set on the things of the flesh**” but rather on “**the things of the Spirit**” (v-5). It is not a suggestion but a **FACT**, Christians are “**not in the flesh but in the Spirit**,” because “**the Spirit of God dwells in you**.” He explains that “**the body is dead because of sin**,” but the “**spirit is alive**.” His meaning is clear, the current **physical and mortal body** that we live in is “**dead**,” that is, mortal (able to die) and will ultimately perish and die a physical death. But the human spirit (the essence of our being) of the Christian believer is “**alive**” and will never perish but has eternal life with God and will receive an imperishable spiritual body at the resurrection (1 Cor 15:51-54). This is of course what Jesus meant in John 11:25-26.

**John 11:25-26** - 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; **he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die**. Do you believe this?" NASB