

Jesus clearly said, “*he who believes in me shall live even if he dies.*” His point is unmistakable, the physical body will die, but the person in the true essence shall live. Unlike **unbelievers**, who will die a **spiritual death** (the second death... Rev 20:6, 14, 21:8) forever after physical death, believers will **live forever in spiritual life** (John 3:36, 6:51,58, Acts 13:48, Rom 6:23).

Since we are therefore “*not in the flesh but in the Spirit,*” Paul reasons that we 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

As the English Puritan John Owen made famous the saying “*Be killing sin or sin will be killing you.*” (The Mortification of Sin – John Owen) In this he points to the reality of Christian life, we **ARE mortifying** the deeds of the flesh.

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Notice in this text;

- The **imperative** is directed at you – *you believers*; See here it is our **Christian** obligation and duty to mortify sin, the deeds of the flesh in our daily life
- The **means** of accomplishment – *the Spirit*; There is only one successful power by which mortification can happen, “*by the Spirit,*” as contrasted with the body, or the flesh. It is not done in human strength but only with divine power can the Goliath of sin be killed. Owen comments; “*Mortification from a self-strength, carried on by ways of self-invention, to the end of self-righteousness, is the soul and substance of all false religion in the world.*”
- The **Christian obligation** – *put to death the deeds of the body*; The actual work is killing sin that we commit with our “*body,*”.... “*put it to death,*” do not let it live, exterminate it. The “*deeds of the body*” are in view, but consider that the deeds are only the expression of inward lust and sinful motives, these must be mortified also being committed inwardly with the body. We must kill sin’s vigor, strength, influence, craftiness, subtlety and life. It is our ongoing constant duty, our present active state, mortification of sin.
- A conditional **promise** – *if by the Spirit you,... you will live*; Those who mortify, live forever. There is a certain connection between mortifying and living (spiritual life as opposed to spiritual death). Owen comments; “*The intent of the text in this conditional expression is that there is a certain infallible connection and coherence between true mortification and eternal life; if you use this means, you shall obtain that end; if you do mortify, you will live.*”

See here in Romans 8:12-13 that **mortification** is our **Christian duty and obligation**, the true state of every believer is the constant killing of sin in our daily life.

This **concept of mortifying and killing sin** is repeated throughout the Apostolic writings and comes to us in the form of imperatives, non-negotiable commandments explaining our **duty as image bearers** who bear the **name and image of Christ**.

Ephesians 5:3-12 - 3 But **do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you**, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be **no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting**, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that **no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the

sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore **do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord;** walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 And **do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;** 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. NASB

Notice several things about this text. It teaches us of the nature of real believers and the Christian duty in regard to sin in the Christian life.

- Paul names **specific sins** and **commands** us to put them away.
- People whose lives are **dominated by sin** are “*sons of disobedience*” and not true Christians and “*will not inherit the kingdom of God.*” Paul contrasting believers and unbelievers as evidenced by the fruit of their lives.
1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - 9 Or **do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such **were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. NASB
- Christians were “*formerly darkness but now are light in the Lord,*” noting our true state.
- He regularly gives a **vivification** (put on) when he gives a **mortification** (put off). Where sin is removed, virtue is to be inserted;
 - “*do not let*” v-3... “*but rather*” v-4,
 - “*do not be partakers with them*” v-7.... “*walk as children of light*” v-8,
 - “*do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them*” v-11
- **Sin** is so **heinous to God** it is disgraceful to even talk about it

Two other really clear texts calling us to mortification are Colossians 3:5-11 and Romans 6:11-14. In Colossians 3:5-11 see Paul using the **analogy of death** with **personal** and **specific sins**. He tells us to “*consider the members of your earthly body as dead.*” See how he points to the **chief work of faith**, the **renewing of the mind**. “*Consider*”, think about them as “*dead.*”

Mortification begins with the constant renewing of the mind and is focused on using the Spirit’s power to kill sin. Notice also, the contrast of our old life, “*in them you once walked, when you were living in them.*” But now you have, “*put on the new self*” (vivification), you have cognitively chosen to walk in virtue. This virtue **IS** “*being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One.*” See here New Testament imperatives clearly laid out as “*put off*” or **mortification**, and “*put on*” or **vivification** and that these are done by the **renewing of the mind** which results in changed actions with the body.

Colossians 3:5-11 - 5 Therefore **consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.** 6 For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, 7 and **in them you also once walked**, when you were living in them. 8 But **now you also, put them all aside**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 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 NASB

Notice a very similar correlation in Romans 6:11-14. Here Paul tells us “*consider yourselves to be dead to sin.*” Again the **analogy of death** to sin is used in our “*mortal body,*” or actions of daily living. This is done by the **renewing of the mind**, “*consider yourselves dead to sin.*” As a result, he says, “*do not let sin reign.*” That is, your life is not dominated by sin, it is the exception, not the rule. The course and trajectory of the Christian life is righteousness, not sin. Do not let it rule you so that you sin with your body, but rather “*present yourselves to God as*