

- Sin is within us – 7:17-23
- Sin makes war against us and never rests - 7:14-25
- Our inner man delights in God's law – 7:15-23

Then of course in Romans 8, Paul gives us the keys to victory explaining how God will by His power overcome our enemy within and the war will end in victory. This victory is of course, the **freedom from sin and death** that has **already been granted to believers because of Jesus Christ and the Gospel**. Paul after crying out with the agony of spiritual warfare within, *“Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”*, explains that this is God's purpose in it all, so that in and through this warfare in the Sanctification process, God is leading us by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, and being glorified in us and through us. He explains that Christ has already purchased our freedom from sin's domination and its curse which is death, and that in Him we are no longer under condemnation because of Christ person and work. Having cancelled the debt and penalties that we owed for our transgressions of the Law, God through Christ has given us a freedom which allows us to live our sanctification by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:1-4 - 1 There is **therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **set you free from the law of sin and of death**. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, **He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us**, who do not walk according to the flesh, **but according to the Spirit**. NASB

Living out this new freedom is accomplished by the **renewing of the mind** which occurs because of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Now having the Law written upon our hearts by God in regeneration, we have **a new mindset fixed upon the things of the Spirit**, giving us a new focus on God's will which results in *“life and peace”* with God. All of this because we are **resting on the good promises of what God has already done for us in Christ**. Paul contrasts our former life of being dominated by the sinful nature which brings death, with now having our spirits made **“alive”** and living in the freedom and power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:5-8 - 5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, **but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit**. 6 **For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace**, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 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

Here Paul has explained in no uncertain terms, that all true Christians have been resurrected from spiritual death saying, **“the spirit is alive because of righteousness,”** that is because of the righteousness that has been imputed to us in the Gospel (Romans 8:2-3). All of this good news about our new condition in Christ brings us to **the obligation to mortify the flesh**. Paul explains, since God has done all of this for us, that we are now **obligated to kill remaining sin** while we do live in these mortal bodies. **While we live, we must mortify**.

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

And this effort of mortification, is done by faith in God's power, it is *“by the Spirit”* that we are *“putting to death the deeds of the body.”* It is the done through the renewing of the mind in God's will, and empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is through the Word and by the Spirit that God is sanctifying us. This he calls us to and describes it as **“walking by the Spirit,”** or living according to the Spirit's desire for our lives. Of course this is nothing new to Paul's

doctrine of the Christian Life. He has clearly taught us that the Christian life is lived out by God's power through faith which he has described as "*walking in the Spirit.*" This he has said we do in contrast to the flesh or sinful nature, which is at enmity with God's will and purpose for our life. He has clearly described this warfare of flesh and Spirit to us in Galatians.

Galatians 5:16-18 - 16 But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 **For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.** 18 But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the Law. NASB

So we must recognize that we will always be at **war with the flesh** while we live in these mortal bodies. This requires our **constant vigilance** in the war! And therefore we must **mortify the flesh**, because of our obligation to Christ, **putting it to death by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit**, becoming like Christ and bearing God's image in greater degree through the course of Christian life. You see, even though we have been delivered from the power of sin, it still lives within and seeks to dominate and destroy us. Therefore we must **learn to discern** and identify **sinful thoughts** and tendencies in our hearts and minds through our knowledge from the Word. And then **by the Spirit's power mortify it**, and then in **vivification, replacing it with the good virtue of the fruit of the Spirit**. In the same context in Galatians Paul teaches us how to discern very specific sins and calls us to mortify them.

Galatians 5:19-21 - 19 Now **the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these**, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. NASB

These he points out are in contrast to the **good virtue** that is **produced in us by the Holy Spirit**.

Galatians 5:22-24 - 22 But **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. NASB

Again he states that this mortifying and vivifying is true of all real Christians saying, "*those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*" You see it is the "**passions and desires**" of sin that are within our hearts and minds that we must crucify, before they come to fruition is sinful activity. Therefore God purpose in sanctification is fulfilled in the Christian life "**walking by the Spirit,**" being "**led by the Spirit,**" and then we will not "**carry out the desire of the flesh.**"

Galatians 5:16-18 - 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 **For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.** 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. NASB

Let us understand then, that our cooperation with God in image bearing and sanctification, and the warfare that attends it, is largely waged on the battlefield of the heart and mind, through faith believing. Through God dependent effort we can mortify sin (put off) and vivify virtue (put on), putting the good glory of God on display in and through our lives.

The Mind is the battlefield

Now this is why it is of utmost importance for the Christian to have a daily habit of feeding upon the Holy Word of God so that their mind can undergo a renewing and cleansing from the flesh and our fallen worldly thinking. This equips us with the knowledge of God's will for our lives, and skills to discern virtue from vice, goodness from sinfulness, and recognize the evil of indwelling sin so that it can be mortified by the Spirit. It is through the Word that sin is