

Providence Presbyterian Church
Men's Bible Study and Fellowship
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Sanctification: Fighting, Flourishing, Finishing

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. – Colossians 3:1-9

This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man; yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part; whence arises a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. In which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail; yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part does overcome; and so, the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. – Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 13.2-3

Review and Introduction

After being reminded of the radical changes that take place in the life of the believer: a change in status and standing, a change of families and privileges, a change of masters and compulsions, a change of owners and occupants, and a change of citizenship, we must now address the reality of the ongoing need to identify, address and kill remaining indwelling sin in our lives.

The ongoing battle

With the flesh, the world and the devil

*We have good reason to enter the conflict with the enemy of sin in optimistic mood! Not for a moment, however, dare we delude ourselves into thinking that the victory will be won consistently without blood, sweat and tears. Surviving sin, let it be said once more, is not reigning sin, but it is real sin. Sinclair Ferguson, *Know Your Christian Life**

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. – Galatians 5:17-21

See Romans 8:9 and Galatians 5:24

Dealing with/Crucifying sin in our lives

Wrong views of mortification

Rightly seeing this as a central practical issue in the Christian life

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell and if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. –Matthew 5:29-30

See also Luke 9:23

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. – Galatians 5:24

But see the affirmation and strong warnings of Colossians 2:20-23

A Sound Foundation

*Mortification from a self-strength, carried on by ways of self-invention unto the end of self-righteousness, is the soul and substance of all false religion in the world. – John Owen, quoted by Sinclair Ferguson in *Know Your Christian Life**

If we build it on man-made rules (don't do this, don't go to that, don't touch this, keep away from that) we live under the delusion that we are truly dealing with indwelling sin when in fact we are merely altering our outward habits. This is no lasting foundation, and when the crisis of the 'day of evil' comes (Eph 6:13) we will find ourselves on sinking sand.

Union with Christ is the true foundation – Go back to Colossians 2:20; 3:1ff

- A new identity for an entirely different way of life – See Romans 7:4

The idea and reality of “putting sin to death” must be part of this sound foundation

- Is not: the eradication of sin, diverting of sin, acting out of fear of discovery, altering the form
- It is...

It is the constant battle against sin which we fight daily—the refusal to allow the eye to wander, the mind to contemplate, the affections to run after anything which will draw us from Christ. It is the deliberate rejection of any sinful thought, suggestion, desire, aspiration, deed, circumstance or provocation at the moment we become conscious of its existence. It is the consistent endeavour to do all in our powers to weaken the grip which sin in general, and its manifestations in our own lives in particular, has.

Not just weeding the garden, but planting and watering – Again Colossians 3:5-11

The Places this Happens

In our private lives – see also Ephesians 4:29

In our everyday experiences

In the life of the church – See also Ephesians 4:15 and John 17:23

Ways that this will come about

Recognize sin for what it is

Bring your sin into the light of God's presence – His wrath toward sin

Recall shame of past sin – balance needed, but Col 3:7 and Romans 6:21

Remember you are joined to Christ and the Holy Spirit – I Corinthians 6:15-19

Pursue Christ and the fruit of the Spirit – Colossians 3:12-17; Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 8:13

N.B.: This lesson follows very closely the content of Chapter 15: Crucifying Sin in Sinclair Ferguson's *Know Your Christian Life*