

# Methods for Mortifying Sin (Part 2)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 14 February 2022

Preacher: Tom Holland

[ 0 : 00 ] One of the essentials, underline that word in your mind, essentials, in the pursuit of holiness is the mortification of sin, the killing of sin in our lives.

! And last week's lesson, which was that pivot, one of them, we talked about a few weeks ago in basketball where you change directions. Last week's lesson initiated our look at the Scriptures that provide the ammunition to battle sin in our life.

If you're going to go into a battle, it's good to have ammunition. Right, Rocky? Yeah. Reminds me of an FBI agent. He was cashing his check one Thursday in the bank in Florida and they were being robbed.

And the president of the bank knew who he was. He looked at him and he said, and he opened up his coat and didn't have it. He said, he'd lift his gun in the office. You need ammunition to do battle. We started with an appropriate passage given us by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2.11.

[ 1 : 28 ] Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

Now, Peter's message could not be plainer. If we have any hope in battling sin in our life, we must abstain from fleshly lusts.

And regrettably, in the 21st century, that's kind of the engine that runs everything. I'm hearing from people, Oscar's one of them, and I think Mike, and how many end up turning off their television during halftime yesterday.

And I was watching a tape delay and I didn't watch their halftime thing. The Apostle even provided us the reason for this.

It is because fleshly lusts war against the soul. This truth represents the first weapon in what will become an arsenal for us of scriptural truth in the ongoing battle against sin.

[ 2 : 39 ] And I'm sure before it's over, I'm going to have a separate piece of paper with all these dot pointed. Your arsenal, your ammunition. So we have our first weapon there.

And Peter reveals this through the Spirit of God that we have to abstain from fleshly lusts. That's bullet number one. The Apostle Paul will provide us with our next round.

He tells us that we are to make no provision for the flesh. Closely related. But Paul says make no provision for the flesh.

This is a quote from the 13th chapter of the book of Romans. In context, this passage says the following. Let's rid ourselves of the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Let's behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and debauchery, not in strife and jealousy.

[ 3 : 56 ] Now, if we understood the Greek language, which I certainly don't, we would realize that Paul is using the image of a soldier here who is about to be drawn into battle.

And of course, living in the Roman Empire, and Paul was himself a Roman citizen, saw soldiers all the time. That's why they had a Roman Empire. They used their soldiers to conquer lands.

Unfortunately, this soldier is not prepared for battle. He's been engaged in the imagery here of a night of debauchery and sexual sin.

He is suffering from the results of a night of drunkenness. He hasn't recovered yet from that. And now dawn is approaching and the time for battle has arrived.

Now, for our fictional soldier, it is now a time to rid himself of the clothes of the night before because he does not dare to go into battle with those garments.

[ 5 : 05 ] You don't want to wear your pajamas into a battle where there are spears and arrows and swords and all that, or M60 machine guns. This passage uses the words, rid ourselves.

Other translations use the phrase, lay aside. Either of these create an image of ridding ourselves or laying aside the deeds of darkness.

What this soldier did the night before did nothing to prepare him for the fight that lay ahead. This is an important point.

Unbelievers sin because it is their nature to sin. I'm speaking there of unbelievers. They sin by nature.

They have nothing within them to fight the good fight. They have nothing within them to rise above that sin nature.

[ 6 : 14 ] In fact, the Word of God describes all unbelievers as dead in trespasses and sins. The Bible says in Ephesians 2.2, speaking to believers, and you once were dead in trespasses and sins.

In that state, the unbeliever sins by nature. I heard Dr. MacArthur many times ask the question, don't we have a free will? He said, yes, you do. You have the freedom to choose.

He's talking to unbelievers. You have the freedom to choose what sin you want to commit. So, yeah, you can choose what sin you want to be involved in. But unbelievers sin because it is their nature.

This is not true for the true believer in Christ. We're a new creation. The Lord has taken our sin and He's taken our sin nature and He's nailed it to a cross.

Well, that's good news, right? Believers don't sin anymore? Well, let's go that far. Do believers still sin? Absolutely. We sin every single day.

[ 7 : 31 ] We live in unredeemed flesh. And that is where the battle is at that I mentioned earlier. I talked to my good Wesleyan friends.

I'm on the board with VOM and there's many of them out there and many of them on the board. And they said, what do you mean I sin every day? I said, have you ever loved God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?

Well, I haven't done that. Have you ever loved your neighbor totally as yourself? Well, I haven't done that either. I said, so you're in violation of the two greatest commandments 24 hours a day. That's why we need a Savior.

We can't even fulfill the two greatest commandments. Never mind about the 660 New Testament commandments we're supposed to fulfill. But we have an important distinction here.

We no longer sin by nature. We sin by choice. We choose to sin. May I say that puts us in a very disappointing category.

[ 8 : 34 ] Our sins are motivated by desires. But we do have within us the ammunition to lay aside our sins.

And that ammunition is the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. He comes into the life of every believer. Never leaves us. Never forsakes us. And the indwelling Holy Spirit wrote these words through the Apostle Paul. Ephesians 4.22.

Rid yourselves. There you have that again. Rid yourselves or lay aside. Rid yourselves of the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.

And again, other translations say lay aside the old self. When Paul wrote to the church in Colossae, he had this to say in chapter 3, starting in verse 5, put to death.

[ 9 : 38 ] That's pretty graphic, isn't it? 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've 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.

Great advice there. Great spiritual counsel. In the context of the Greek language, the Apostle Paul is telling the believers in Colossae they must continually be laying aside these particular sins.

This is continuous action. Be about the business of always laying aside. When they crop up, lay them aside. Rid yourself of them. And the problem with us as believers is we have a tendency from time to time to put back on our dirty clothes.

[ 11 : 12 ] let's just slip into some dirty clothes. When the Lord raised Lazarus from the grave, I have no doubt in my own mind that Mary and Martha threw a great banquet in honor of Jesus and also to welcome their brother back from death.

Can you imagine if Lazarus had shown up at the banquet having put back on those dirty, smelly grave clothes that he had taken off? Though we have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ, we tend to spend far too much time walking around in dirty grave clothes.

We don't have to do that. We have within us the power residing within us. It's apart from us. It was separate from us. It came into us.

It's salvation. But we have that power within us. Now laying aside is a major theme of the New Testament.

Through the writer of Hebrews, the Lord tells us this in Hebrews 12.1. Lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us.

[ 12 : 33 ] And Peter had something further to say in 1 Peter 2. Put away. That's another form of lay aside. Put away.

All malice. All deceit. All hypocrisy and envy. And all slander. And we shouldn't leave James out of this list.

In James 1.21. Therefore, put away. Rid yourselves. Lay aside. All filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls.

This is great counsel from some great men of God. Now, everything we've studied so far this evening has been on the negative side of the fence.

we started with the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 13. I'm going to give you that quote again because it is important to build from here.

[ 13 : 43 ] And again, you can pick out of here the negativities in Paul's counsel. Let's rid ourselves of the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Let's behave properly as in the days not in carousing, not in drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity, not in debauchery, not in strife and jealousy.

All of this is great and inspired counsel. But how do we do this? It's one thing to say do this. We've got to pull this off.

How do we do it? Can we latch on to some things that are on the positive side to help us? Well, yes we can. Because when I read that to you twice now, what I didn't do is read the next verse.

Verse 14. Which I do now. This is the positive. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 14 : 58 ] Put on Jesus. and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

Put on Jesus. I'm going to tell you when you're walking with Jesus, you're not doing all those other things. You can't do those things, the negatives, and be walking in lockstep with the Lord right next to you or inside you.

You can't do them both. So we are to put off the deeds of darkness and put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is our armor of light that is spoken of in Romans 13, 12. He's the light of the world. The light shines in darkness and darkness cannot overcome.

Can't overcome it. Darkness can't overcome a candle. One little flame. can't do it. Now what precisely does it mean to put on the Lord Jesus Christ?

[ 16 : 09 ] Obviously this is important. It's a command so we need to understand a little bit. Well, that's another way to make reference to the sanctification process.

Sanctification, you'll recall, you know, you were adopted, you were justified, you are being sanctified, you will be glorified. Sanctification for the believer is the process we're in right now being recreated in the image of Christ.

Being more like Jesus as we progress. It's sanctification. Putting on Christ represents our continuing spiritual growth that is both commanded for us to do and it is the privilege of the children of God through the Lord Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit to be in a continual process of sanctification.

sanctification is that act of being recreated in the image of Christ. It is walking as Jesus walked.

We read these words in Colossians chapter 2, Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.

[ 17 : 43 ] Walk in the Lord. He lives in you. Walk in Him. rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith just as you were taught abounding in thanksgiving.

We're so thankful. We ought to be expressing thankfulness every day, shouldn't we? The Christian life is rooted in spiritual growth.

And I'm sure you've heard something like this many times. we are not what we should be. We are not what we're going to be.

But thank God, we are not what we used to be. That's a believer. Not what we should be. Not what we're going to be. But not what we used to be.

Now, if you can think back to your salvation experience, whether it was two months ago or 50 years ago, and there's been zero growth, go back and examine that.

[ 18 : 51 ] Dr. Rogers said the faith that fizzled before the finish was faulty at the first. He could say that. Go back and re-examine. As we grow spiritually in Christ, through the power and presence of the Spirit of God, the old clothes of sin are being discarded.

Lazarus came out of the tomb and I'm sure he couldn't wait to change clothes. We need to change our old clothes because they're clothes of death.

We were dead in trespasses and sin. And we're getting rid of those clothes of sin, whether they were sins of commission or omission as well as thoughts and habits.

It's not enough to discard or put off sins. The vacuum's got to be replaced by something. Those discarded and dirty clothes are being replaced by clothes of righteousness, of truth, of holiness, holiness, and of love.

Again, it is the sanctification process being recreated in the image of Christ. Paul understood this because it was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.

[ 20 : 21 ] Same Holy Spirit that lives in us and gives us truth. And that's why Paul could say this to the Philippian church, chapter 3, great passage of Scripture.

Brothers, I do not consider that I've made it my own. But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal.

for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Magnificent Scripture, worthy of being memorized.

And I still remember how impressed I was the first time I read Dr. MacArthur's comment on this in this passage in his study Bible.

That one right there. Or one life. Dr. MacArthur spoke of forgetting the past and going forward into the future.

[ 21 : 40 ] And basically he went on to say, don't make your life the focus of past spiritual successes. Well, you know, in 1910 I led 400 people to the Lord.

Or I did this in 1950 or 1980 or last week. Don't focus on past spiritual successes.

But John went further and said, and don't let your focus be past sins and failures. He said both of those, success and failure in a spiritual sense, will debilitate you.

It'll wipe you out. Our focus should be on the present which God uses to propel us into the future. Live now realizing now fleeting. It's gone real quickly because we're going forward into the future.

[ 22 : 51 ] I think this was the meaning of the words of the Lord in Luke's gospel chapter 9. No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

A great forming example there. And I tried to plow one time. It wasn't pretty. I've tried it with a tiller and I've tried it on a big tractor. It's not a pretty sight. You don't put your hand to the plow and then turn around and look back and see how well you've done because you're going to be all over that pasture.

I'm living proof of that. We must leave behind our sinful deeds of the flesh, confess them, leave them behind, and grow in grace.

How do we do that? I have some suggestions but they are not all inclusive. We grow spiritually from one level to another by the faithful and may I say systematic study of the Word of God.

Don't be one of these guys that says I'm just going to let the Bible fall open and that's what I'm going to study today. Do it systematically. We should also incorporate meditation on what we have studied.

[ 24 : 22 ] I find myself having to read passages over and over and over. What does that mean? Let me read that again. We must have steady communion and communication!

with the Lord through prayer. Through prayer. It is impossible to make provision for the flesh when we are focused on conversing with the Lord of glory.

How do you do both at one and the same time? You can't. You can't do it. Now, in regard to prayer, I have something hit my head that I studied 35 years ago.

In regard to prayer, I'm going to recommend two types of praying. First, we should have a time set aside for what I've written down here as deep praying.

Where we just go to the Lord and we bear our soul. We just this is the prayer closet type of prayer. Prayer closet type of prayer.

[ 25 : 38 ] This is repentance and confession type of prayer. Confession of known sin. 1 John 1. 9. This is praise to the God of heaven type of prayer where we offer Him praise and thanksgiving for who He is, what He has done, and what He's doing.

This is the deep prayer for your children and your grandchildren. In some of our cases, great grandchildren. But in addition to this, there's something else I read about many years ago and I really liked it.

The writer, I don't even remember who it was, called it, referred to it as sending arrow prayers, an arrow prayer to the Lord.

I like that more. I studied it. As we go through our daily walk with the Lord, the Lord will bring to our minds certain people, certain events that need to be bathed in prayer, or it may be something more visual.

You might see a police officer with a vehicle pulled over. For some reason, I picked them. I don't know why. you may see an officer with somebody pulled over. Shoot an arrow of prayer.

[ 27 : 01 ] Now, don't close your eyes and run into the officer. But shoot an arrow of prayer to God for that officer's safety. I'm telling you, one of the most frightening things is pulling somebody over.

And especially at night, and you're walking up to that car, and you don't have a clue. And there's actually a system to that. This is not part of the study, but if he's a good officer, the first thing he does as he approaches with caution, he puts a little pressure on the trunk to make sure it's not coming up with somebody hiding in there to ambush him.

And then he starts by looking in the back seat, then the front seat, and hopefully he keeps the driver like this looking back over their shoulder at him. They're off balance. But shoot a prayer for that officer's safety.

You may have to pull over because of a fire truck or an ambulance that's behind you going on a call. Pray for that situation as well. You don't know what that situation is.

They're not even 100% sure yet, but God knows. The Lord knows. Growing in grace also involves relying on the Holy Spirit to walk with us and guide and direct our path.

[ 28 : 18 ] Another vital aspect of growing in grace is summed up in this passage from the book of Hebrews chapter 10, the great chapter 10, let's consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds, not abandoning our own meeting together as is the habit of some people, but encouraging one another in all the more as you see the day drawing near.

What day is that? That is the return of Christ for his church. Sin is a slippery slope. If you don't want to fall, don't walk where it's slippery.

Stay out of the slippery. It's difficult to imagine, but many sins have a history. What do I mean by that? Many sins don't just occur.

They've been fed by our mind. when we find ourselves entertaining evil thoughts, make no preparations for even the possibility of sin.

The mind is a fertile breeding ground for sin. Slay it before it breeds. Go to the Lord and say, I want to mortify that or ask him, kill that for me.

[ 29 : 42 ] Kill that thought. I've said this to you all before, but the great preacher Jonathan Edwards came up with a list of resolutions to live by.

He read them once a week. I think there were 77 of them. This is the greatest one in my view as we seek to make no provision for the flesh.

Jonathan Edwards said, never do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life. You know, ask yourself, if I knew I had one hour to live, before I stood before Jesus, would I be doing anything differently than I'm doing right now?

You know? It's great counsel from arguably the greatest preacher ever produced on American soil, the great Jonathan Edwards.

Well, with that, let's close in a word of prayer. Thank you, Father, for your greatness, your love. Indeed, we are thankful to you, Lord, for what you do, all that you do.

[ 30 : 56 ] Lord, we look around at this world, it seems like it's in destruction mode, and yet the psalmist said, the Lord looks and laughs in derision at the plans of men.

Lord, as your church, we look forward to your return. Until that happens, may we occupy with your business and not be ashamed in the day that we stand before you.  
I ask all this in the blessed and holy name of Jesus. Amen. Amen.