

Killing Sin (2)

An inclination to evil is to be found in every person. It is active within everyone. As a result we are caught up in an on-going struggle. The good we ought to do we do not do. The wrong we should not do we do.

Every day we face temptation. Sometimes it is obvious and keenly felt. The battle is intense. At other times the temptation to sin is subtle. We are unaware of it creeping up on us. Its aim is to catch us off our guard. Whether blatant or crafty, we find it hard to resist. So we sin. We do the opposite to what God wants.

What is the believer to do? The apostle Paul is explicit. We are to put the deeds of the body to death (*Romans 8.13 & Colossians 3.5*).

There are two parts to this instruction. *First*, there is a call to recognise the deeds of the body for what they are. *Secondly*, there is a call to act.

Deeds of the body

A earthly deed is an act which does not conform to God's perfect will. Included are acts which contradict any one of God's commands. Such deeds may entail willful disobedience or neglect of a rules for living given by God. The letter and / or the spirit of a law is broken. Furthermore we need to consider motives as well as actions.

In his letter to the believers in Colosse Paul gives examples. Greed, idolatry, lust and sexual sin are all deeds of the body. So too are theft, neglect of the Lord's Day, and covetousness.

Decisive action

Although the verbs used by him differ (*Romans 8.13 & Colossians 3.5*), the general meaning of them is the same. Believers are instructed to kill off any and every deed which may legitimately be called sinful. In other words we are to act decisively.

We are not to turn a blind eye. Nor are we to justify a sin in part or as a whole. Excuses are not acceptable. The only proper way to deal with deeds of the body is to put them to death. They must be slain.

Details

In practise this involves the following.

(1) *It means knowing how God wants us to live.* To that end we need a conscience informed by and ruled by the written word of God. We need to know God's law. And we need to take care to keep it.

(2) *It means recognising the consequences of sin.* Any sin is an offence to God. No believer ever wants to displease him. All sins deserve his judgment. No believer wants to experience that.

(3) *It means remembering God's covenant.* God has planned to have a people who are his own. His people enjoy the privileges of he has for them (*e.g.* forgiveness, the in dwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the assurance of heaven). They also seek to be loyal to him. Their duty is to keep and not break his commands. They aim to be holy as he is holy.

(4) *It means refusing to give in to temptation.* In Genesis 39 (*verses 7-20*) we read of the way the wife of Potiphar tried to seduce Joseph. How she tried to entice him to sin is worthy of a separate study. We want to note - and to do so with care - Joseph did not give in to temptation. He refused to be drawn into sin (*verse 8*).

(5) *It means removing ourselves from the temptation.* When the temptress persisted Joseph knew that it was his duty in the face of such an onslaught to get away from it. Hence he "fled and got out of the house" (*verse 12*). In other words, he give no opportunity for the intended sin to flourish. He refused to let it take root. In so doing he slew it.

(6) *It means remembering Christ.* Joseph sought to be loyal to his master. We are to be loyal to ours. Who is he? He is Christ Jesus. He took the punishment for our sins. He has rescued us from them. He gives us victory over them.

What Joseph did we often fail to do. He was true to God who enabled him to resist temptation. God promises the same power to us.

Joseph is an example to us. He shows us what we must do. We are to put the deeds of the body to death. We are to subdue and kill them.