

Putting to Death the Earthly Nature

Colossians 3:5-17

“To put something to death you must cut off its lines of supply: it is futile and self-deceiving to bemoan one’s inability to resist the last stage of a temptation when earlier stages have gone by unnoticed, or even eagerly welcomed. This does not mean setting up a new hedge around the law, such as branding all the theatrical performances (or whatever) as inherently ‘sinful’. Rather, every Christian has the responsibility, before God, to investigate the lifelines of whatever sins are defeating him personally, and to cut them off without pity. Better that than have them eventually destroy him [or her].” N.T. Wright

- I. Our battle against sin is beyond our ability to win apart from the Holy Spirit’s enablement. His divine power gives us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Therefore we must keep our hearts and minds on “things above,” or we will be easily defeated. Some lose their willingness to fight sin because they see it as either too powerful for them to overcome, or too entertaining. Others are victorious because of their willingness to do battle with what wars against their soul while seeking God’s strength, wisdom, and guidance throughout their struggle.

Col. 3:5-8

James 1:13-15 *When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

- A. God gives us the knowledge we need in order to know and understand our opponent, the sin nature, and how it tempts us to indulge in its evil desires. We know that sin is no longer our master, even though it desires to overrule the Spirit’s influence in our hearts toward righteousness.

Rom. 6:8-14

Gal. 3:5 (verb “put to death” is in the Aorist tense, which means that once the action of “putting to death” sin is started, it will be followed through to completion.)

“If you would make your calling and election sure by proving your faith, if you would so run as to obtain, so travel as to arrive, you must mortify sin. He who doth not kill sin in this way...takes no steps toward journey’s end.” J.I. Packer

- B. God gives us the understanding that our battle with the sin nature is not something we are to shy away from; it is our opponent and is relentless in the pursuit of dominating our hearts and minds. Those who fail to take steps to neutralize sin through the Spirit's enablement, never really know what it is like to be alive in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Gal. 5:6

Rom. 8:13 (verb "put to death" is in the present tense, which means that "putting to death" is to be an ongoing, continuous part of our lives)

- II. Our responsibility as sons and daughters of God Almighty is to be good fighters of righteousness. He equips us with everything we need to take a firm stand against our sin nature and against the "authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:10-17).

- A. Good fighters of righteousness know their enemy and are willing to abstain from the sinful desires that war against their soul. They know their weaknesses, how to guard their hearts and how to avoid temptations deadly blows by keeping their hearts and minds off of the sinful elements of the earthly nature.

Mark 7:21-22

Gal. 5:24

Gal. 5:17

Rom. 7:19

Rom. 7:23

1 Peter 2:11

1 Cor. 9:24-27

- B. Good fighters of righteousness know their superiority over their opponent. They understand that sin no longer has mastery over them because Jesus now dwells in their hearts. They are careful not to fall, and they make sure they stay in a "**vital**" relationship with the Lord through prayer and by staying connected to his Word.

2 Cor 5:17

1 John 3:9

Rom. 6:6

Rom 6:14

Gal 5:16

1 Cor 10:12-13

Heb 4:15-16