

How to Slay Sin, Part 2

Scripture: Romans 13:14

Code: B110219

How do you *slay sin*?

We began answering that question in our last post. Step one was to **understand your true position as a Christian**. You are *in Christ*. That means you're *free* from sin's tyranny and *dead* to sin's power. It's critical you understand that truth as you wage war against sin.

Here's the second step in slaying sin: **Weaken sinful habits and strengthen righteous behavior.**

Imagine you're facing an enemy on the battlefield who enjoyed a good night's sleep, a hearty breakfast, and a personal escort to the most strategic position on the battlefield. And here's the worst part—you provided all those things! Sounds absurd, doesn't it? What kind of lunatic makes provision for his enemies and gives them that kind of advantage?

Think about that. Isn't it true that so often, instead of weakening sin by cutting off all provision, we strengthen and empower sin, by giving it occasion to take root and grow strong? But notice how Scripture addresses that attitude, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (Romans 13:14).

Did you catch that important command? *Make no provision*. Don't *feed* and *strengthen* sin. *Starve* it out; *weaken* it; keep it in an anemic state. Subject it to a slow, debilitating death by removing its strength and vitality. You must cut off all support and provision for sin as if you were laying siege to a castle.

In ancient warfare, an invading army would surround a castle and cut off all supply of food, water, reinforcements...and means of escape. Then the troops would settle down and wait on the inhabitants to either surrender or die—victory by attrition. It was an effective strategy, and a great example of how you should lay siege to indwelling sin. An enemy without strength will soon be a *defeated* enemy.

A malnourished sinful habit will soon die. Count on it. Richard Baxter once said, "Lay siege to your sins, and starve them out, by keeping away the food and fuel which is their maintenance and life." The idea is to wear down and weaken your sinful habits, to keep them in a perpetual state of death.

John Owen used the language of crucifixion to make that point. He compared killing sin to impaling a man on a cross:

He first struggles, and strives, and cries out with great strength and might, but, as his blood and spirits waste, his strivings are faint and seldom, his cries low and hoarse, scarce to be heard...[sin] may have sometimes a dying pang that makes an appearance of great vigor and strength, but it is quickly over, especially if it be kept from considerable success.

As a Christian, you have power over sin. You can weaken and kill it, and the Bible shows you how.

Search carefully and you'll notice how some of the most practical chapters in the New Testament command you to "put off," "lay aside," "abstain from," and "do away with" corrupt behavior, much like you would take off old, worn-out clothes and put on brand-new ones.

That's the language woven throughout Ephesians 4:22-32 and Colossians 3:8-17. In Colossians 3, Paul writes:

But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self which is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him. (Colossians 3:8-10)

Practical and specific. Lay aside your old manner of life and adopt behavior consistent with your new nature. Put off the old and put on the new. Weaken old, sinful habits and cultivate righteous, godly behavior.

But notice how the Word of God not only tells you which sinful habits to put off in those sections, it goes further and provides righteous replacements:

- Replace lying with truth telling.
- Replace stealing with working.
- Replace hatred with love.
- Replace bitterness with forgiveness.
- Replace pride with humility.
- Replace harshness with gentleness.
- Replace coldness with compassion.

If you read those sections carefully, you'll notice how the message moves from what God has done for you *in* Christ, to what you have been empowered to do *for* Christ. The power to choose which behavior you wear rests with *you*, Christian.

That's step two in slaying sin. Two more to go...

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