

GRACE TO YOU

ROMANS 8:12-13

THE SPIRIT TRANSFORMS OUR HOLINESS



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

"I feel so dead....spiritually." Is that you? You used to be so spiritually alive, but now you feel so spiritually dead. You still go through the motions of the Christian life, but it's like dragging a corpse around. It's a drudge and a labor. What's gone wrong? And, how can I fix it? **Why am I so dead and how can I revive my soul?** Paul answers both questions in Romans 8:12-13.

BACKGROUND

Romans 8 tells us a lot about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. What the law could not and cannot do, the Holy Spirit can and does.

- The Holy Spirit transforms our conscience (1-3)
- The Holy Spirit transforms our minds (4-9)
- The Holy Spirit transforms our bodies (10-11)
- **The Holy Spirit transforms our holiness (12-13)**
- The Holy Spirit transforms our assurance (14-17)
- The Holy Spirit transforms our suffering (18-25)
- The Holy Spirit transforms our prayers (26-27)
- The Holy Spirit transforms our purpose (28-29)



What's the first step back to life?
Calculating our debt to the Holy Spirit.



1. WE ARE DEBTORS TO THE SPIRIT

"...we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die" (12-13).

We are not debtors to the flesh

We don't owe the flesh (our sinful human nature) anything. We are under no obligation to the flesh. We have no debt to the flesh. The flesh has no legal or moral hold on us. It's not our friend or benefactor but our enemy and our mortal foe.

We therefore have no obligation to live according to the flesh, to listen to the flesh, to follow the flesh, to respond to the flesh's promptings. If we do try to please or satisfy our flesh, we will die. Our spiritual life will die a little. Sin starves, suffocates, and strangles our spiritual life. If that becomes a lifestyle, it means we are not truly saved, and we will die eternally.

We are debtors to the Spirit

This is not stated explicitly, but it is clearly implied as a contrast. If it was to be stated explicitly, it would read: "We are debtors to the Spirit, to live according to the Spirit. For if you live according to the Spirit, you will live."

The Spirit transforms our conscience (Rom. 8:1-3), our minds (4-9), and our bodies (10-11). We therefore owe the Spirit so much. We owe the Spirit our spiritual life and our eternal life. Therefore we dedicate our lives to the Spirit. We listen to the Spirit, we follow the Spirit, we respond to the Spirit's promptings. If we do that, we will live like we've never lived before. Every time we follow the Spirit we get more of the Spirit, we get more life.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Count your debt to the Spirit. Take time to calculate how much you owe the flesh. What has it ever done for you? How has it ever benefitted you? Where has it ever helped you? How much has it added to your life? How much do you owe the flesh? Nothing! Then calculate what the Holy Spirit has done for you, given to you, helped you, added to you. How much do you owe? Everything!

Increase your life by the Spirit. As you count your debt to the Spirit, it will make you more obliged to the Spirit, more grateful to the Spirit. That in turn will make you more aware of the Spirit, more receptive to the Spirit, more responsive to the Spirit, more alive by the Spirit. We are either spiritually dead or spiritually alive, but there are degrees of spiritual life. We can be barely breathing or thriving and flourishing. If we want the latter, if we want increased life, here's how.

BAD DEBT SLAYS
GOOD DEBT STIMULATES



What do we do with this new life?
We kill.



2. WE ARE KILLERS BY THE SPIRIT

We kill by the Spirit

"...if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live"? (13).

We "put to death the deeds of the body." The deeds of the body are not only the sinful actions of the body, but also the desires, thoughts, words, and actions that precede and produce them (Matt. 15:18-20). We are to view these as murderers that we must murder first. The only debt we owe this enemy is death.

We kill sin by starving it of food (through the eye or the ear), by feeding it poison (God's Word), by attacking it with prayer, by joining forces with others (accountability), by remembering the worst ever murder (Christ on the cross). We are to do this, we are to do the killing. But we cannot do this in our own strength or by our own power. We cannot do this by self-discipline or self-improvement. We can only do this by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Spirit of life helps us to kill the threats to his life in us.

"Until you believe that life is war — that the stakes are your soul — you will probably just play at Christianity with no blood-earnestness and no vigilance and no passion and no wartime mindset. If that is where you are this morning, your position is very precarious. The enemy has lulled you into sleep or into a peacetime mentality as if nothing serious is at stake. And God, in his mercy, has you here this morning, and had this sermon appointed to wake you up, and put you on a wartime footing." **John Piper.**

We live by killing

"You will live."

If we kill, we will live. Killing killers enlivens life. Christians kill sin to stimulate life. For the Christian, life follows killing. We live by killing. As you kill, you will get more life, which will energize you to kill another sin, which will give you more life, and so on. There is always another sin to kill, and each attempted murder is an opportunity for more life.

What does that life look like? It looks like greater love for God, greater assurance of salvation, greater heavenly-mindedness, greater discernment, greater guidance, greater courage, greater opportunities to witness, greater help in everyday life, greater answers to prayer, greater enjoyment of God, greater insight into Scripture, greater usefulness to others, greater hatred of sin. So much life!

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Get a wartime mindset. "The only possible attitude toward out-of-control desire is a declaration of all-out war. . . . There is something about war that sharpens the senses . . . You hear a twig snap or the rustling of leaves and you are in attack mode. Someone coughs and you are ready to pull the trigger. Even after days of little or no sleep, war keeps us vigilant." **Ed Welch.**

Kill one sin. Instead of trying to attack all our sins at once, target one, and develop a plan to murder it this week. It might be time-wasting, lust, gossip, anger, greed, discontent. Whatever it is, identify it, target it, gather intelligence on it, build up resources, develop a plan of attack, and determine that this week you are going to murder this sin. Then target another, and another, and soon you will become a serial killer of serial sins.

KILL SIN OR
SIN WILL KILL YOU



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



SUMMARY



A NEW CHAPTER

Unbeliever: You will never kill sin without the help of the Holy Spirit. You might stop the acts of sin for a while, but the root is still there and only the Holy Spirit can root it out. Pray that the Holy Spirit will start new life in your soul by regeneration.

Believer: You need a wartime mentality and a killer instinct when it comes to sin. The more you kill, the more you will revive. But like, the unbeliever, you cannot do this on your own. Pray to the Holy Spirit for a murderous spirit and a ruthless merciless determination to kill sin. The weapon he uses most is the Word of God (Heb. 4:12).

Prayer: Sin-killing Spirit, share your killer instinct with me so that I can murder sin and enjoy deeper, greater, and better life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has killed or is killing your spiritual life?
2. What debts to you owe to the Holy Spirit? Put a value on it.
3. What have you found to give you greater spiritual life?
4. What have you found helpful in killing sin?
5. How do you know if you have increased spiritual life? What are the signs of life?
6. How did Jesus experience these verses in his earthly life?

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