

# ROMANS (8:12-14)

## *Death-Match With Sin*

PART 31 – APRIL 3, 2005

### MUCH OBLIGED

On Easter, we saw that in order to receive the ultimate gift of immortal life in the eternal realm, living in perfect intimacy with a loving Creator-Father, we must be *filled* with his Spirit. This means we must be occupied, influenced, and owned.

This week, Paul talks about an obligation we have, if we're filled with God's Spirit. And that is to make war on sin.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, **you will die**; but if by the Spirit you **put to death** the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. – *Romans 8:12-14 NIV*

I want to draw your attention to the severity of Paul's warning:

- If your sinful nature has its way: "you will die"
- And, the only solution is to: "put [it] to death"

Paul is describing an eternal life and death struggle. Whether we admit it or not ... you and I are in a *death-match* with sin!

Paul wants us to understand, comprehend that ...

- When it comes to sin: we must kill or be killed.

It's interesting how Paul phrases his opening:

... we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it ... – *Romans 8:12 NIV*

Q: Do you ever feel *obligated*, ordered, or commanded by sin?

We can get *stuck* in a particular pattern of sinful behavior (through physical or emotional addiction, or predisposition) and it can feel like we have very little choice in the matter.

- Sin is a killer who forces us to pay for our own destruction.



## WARTIME MINDSET

We must declare war on our own sinful impulses.

Q: Have you made peace with enslaving desires like: greed, pornography, approval, power, lust, alcohol, tobacco, fear, self-pity, drugs, gossip, anger, lying, or cheating?

Q: I'm not asking if you've conquered 'em, but are you at war?

You see, if we don't *identify* the enemy and *declare* war, our Christianity will be careless, devoid of vigilance or alertness.

We need a wartime mindset toward sin. Aware. Prepared. Sharpened senses. A twig snaps, leaves rustle, and you're in attack mode.

- Truly loving God means truly loathing sin.

No matter how it may feel, we are under *no obligation* to join forces with the enemy to pay for our own destruction, if, if ...

... if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body ... - *Romans 8:13b NIV*

Total freedom is there for a believer who chooses to put this enemy to death; but victory is only possible *by the Spirit*.

But we need to understand 1) What the misdeeds are, 2) How it is they *die*, and 3) How we exterminate 'em, "by the Spirit."

Q: First, what are the "misdeeds of the body"?

A: Any action prompted by sin (or lust or unrighteousness).

But sin goes much deeper than our "misdeeds".

- Misdeeds are simply the instrument of the deeper sin

And it is the *root* to the misdeed that must be cut and killed in order for the misdeed to stop *expressing* the *true* sin. We must cut off the enemy's "supply line."

True sin is rebellion, distrust, and hostility toward God. It's a condition of the heart giving rise to the misdeeds.

- The sinful nature just doesn't want to be told what to do.
- It doesn't trust that God is going to give us what's best.
- It's angry at the perceived lack of what we've been given.

## BY THE SPIRIT

This type of enemy is only fought and overcome by trusting in the superiority of Christ over whatever misdeed sin is offering.

- This is why it can only happen “by the Spirit”.
- We can’t just look at temptation and go, “NO!”

But, “by the Spirit” does NOT mean the Spirit is some kind of magical tool or weapon that we conjure up to conquer sin for us. The Holy Spirit is the third person of God’s trinity. We are in the Holy Spirit’s hands, he is NOT in ours!



Think about the difference between a motorboat and a sailboat. We can control a motorboat all by ourselves (we fuel the tank and start the motor and go).

But a sailboat is different. We hoist the sails and steer the rudder; but we are utterly dependent on the *wind* for power.

- Being “led by the Spirit” is like piloting a sailboat.

If we’re going to be led by the Spirit, we must be in a *position* to hear from him, and *set* to be directed by him.

## GOD SWORD

And if we’re going to successfully sever the root of sin, we must use the weapon that is offered to us by the Spirit.

Ephesians 6:13-17 talks about putting on the full armor of God. But in this passage there’s only one *offensive* weapon mentioned.

- It is a weapon used chiefly for killing.

Take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. - *Ephesians 6:17 NIV*

Q: Why would the Word of God be called the Sword of the Spirit?

A: Because this is the weapon that severs the root of misdeeds.

- God’s Word will keep me from sin, or sin will keep me from God’s Word.

If I am going to put to death the misdeeds of the body (the symptoms of sin) “by the Spirit”, I must embrace the words of God and the realities that they stand for in my life.

- It's not enough that it's God's Word. I have to slide the "s" to the right, and make it my personal: God sWord!

Q: Do you have a habit picking up your "God sword" and using it?

Q: When something jumps out at you, do you chew (meditate) on it?

Q: And when it gets to your heart, do you write it down and memorize it?

The Spirit leads us in many ways; (like: prayer, impressions, circumstances, emotions, Godly counsel and teachings) but for being led into battle, none can replace his sword. When we immerse our minds and hearts in the truth, life, and power of his promises, we are made able to withstand the *false promises* of temptation ... by severing their root.

## OUT OF GAS

There's another difference between a motorboat and a sailboat:

- Motorboats will eventually run out of fuel.
- A sailboat's power source is inexhaustible.



Q: Do you ever feel like you've run out of gas, and you're struggling to row against the current?

Feeling a constant sense of strain and burden in our walk with Christ is a good indication that we're in the wrong "boat".

[Jesus said:] Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. - *Matthew 11:28 NIV*

We must "learn from [the One who is] gentle and humble in heart," by allowing his Spirit to lead us into his word. This is how he builds in us the desire, the determination, and ultimately the discipline to reject wonderfully packaged evil.

... [and] you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God ... - *Romans 8:14 NIV*



Picture yourself in the sails, arms outstretched. You can feel the wind of the Spirit; filling you and leading you into the open water and blue sky of life.

Freedom awaits every battle-scarred believer who clings to these truths: God is good, he's in control, and he loves me more than I can comprehend.

- This is why, the faith that makes peace with God makes war on sin.