

Living so as to please God; On becoming sanctified (2)

Introduction:

Last Lord's Day we began to address the subject of the believer's sanctification as it is addressed in 1 Thessalonians 4. The word, sanctification, is found in the third verse of this chapter. It reads, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification." We spoke last Lord's Day of the doctrine of sanctification more broadly. Today we will address the specific aspects of our sanctification that our Lord has set before us in our text through the hand of the apostle Paul. Let us read once again the first 8 verses of 1 Thessalonians 4.

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. ²For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

I might take the time to identify two books that you will find helpful on this subject of sanctification. **Arthur Pink** wrote the book, *The Doctrine of Sanctification*.¹ It is available on line.¹ Also, **John Owen** wrote a classic entitled, *The Mortification of Sin*. The full text of this work is also found online.² I have included a summary of the contents of Owen's book at the end of these notes.

Now we gave attention last week to the definition of sanctification put forth in the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Here it is again.

Question #35: What is sanctification?

Answer: Sanctification is the work of God's free grace,³ whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God,⁴ and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.⁵

Now Paul wrote to these Christians in **verse 3a**, "*For this is the will of God, your sanctification.*" But then he stated a specific area of their lives he would have them to be sanctified. **Verse 3b** reads, "*that you abstain from sexual immorality.*" We may conclude that...

I. Our sanctification involves abstaining from sin.

¹ <http://www.angelfire.com/va/sovereigngrace/sanct.pink.html>

² <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/owen/mort.html>

³ Ezek. 36:27; Phil. 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:13.

⁴ 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:23,24; 1 Thess. 5:23

⁵ Ezek. 36:25-27; Rom. 6:4,6, 12-14; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pet. 2:24

The action of the Christian abstaining from sin that he had formerly indulged is sometimes referred to in Scripture as dying unto sin. Our sanctification involves our breaking with sin that we formerly committed. But sanctification is not only ceasing from sin, but also...

II. Our sanctification involves living righteously.

Sanctification involves more than just dying to sin. It is not just the absence of sin, but the performing of positive righteousness; it involves living unto holiness. Paul stated this in the following clause. **Verse 4a** reads, “*that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor.*” God has given us bodies by which we are to use to serve Him in His world. We have five senses by which we interact with the world about us. We are to use our senses, our bodies, to interact with the world in a manner that pleases God, in a manner consistent with His righteousness. Again, the Scripture says, “*that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor.*” To live in a holy manner is honorable. To live in a sinful manner is to live in a dishonorable way. For example, we read of God turning people over to sin that is dishonorable, or shameful. We read in Romans 1 of the judgment of God,

²¹For although they knew God, they did not *honor* him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. ²⁴Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the *dishonoring* of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. ²⁶For this reason God gave them up to *dishonorable* passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature... (Rom. 1:21-26)

To live according to God’s righteousness is honorable. To live contrary to righteousness is dishonorable.

And so, sanctification involves God’s work of grace in the life of the Christian in two ways. First, sanctification involves dying unto sin. Secondly, sanctification involves living unto righteousness, which is a live in accordance to God’s commandments-- His Word. Two words have commonly been employed by theologians to identify these two works of God’s grace. The first is *mortification*, which is the act of dying unto sin. The second is *vivification*, which is the act of living unto righteousness. We may see these terms in a treatment of sanctification by **Arthur Pink**. In the following reading he shows the relationship between regeneration, or the new birth, and sanctification, the soul’s growth in grace.

At regeneration a principle of holiness is communicate to us; practical sanctification is the exercise of that principle in living to God. In regeneration the Spirit imparts saving grace; in His work of sanctification, He strengthens and develops the same. As “original sin” or that indwelling corruption which is in us at our natural birth, contains within it the seeds of all sin, so that grace which is imparted to us at the new birth contains within it the seeds of all spiritual graces; and as the one develops and manifests itself as we grow, so it is with the other.

“Sanctification is a constant, progressive renewing of the whole man, whereby the new creature doth daily more and more die unto sin and live unto God. Regeneration is the birth, sanctification is the growth of this babe in grace. In regeneration, the sun of holiness rises; in sanctification it keepeth its course, and shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day (Prov. 4:18). The former is a specific change from nature to grace (Eph. 5:8); the latter is a gradual change from one degree of grace to another (Psa. 84:7), whereby the Christian goeth from strength to strength till he appear before God in Zion” (George Swinnock. 1660).

Thus, the foundation of sanctification is laid in regeneration, in that a holy principle is then first formed in us. That holy principle evidences itself in conversion, which is a turning away from sin to holiness, from Satan to Christ, from the world to God. It continues to evidence itself under the constant work of *mortification* and *vivification*, or the practical putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new; and is completed at glorification. The great difference then between regeneration and experimental and practical sanctification is that the former is a Divine act, done once and for all; while the latter is a Divine work of God's grace, wherein He sustains and develops, continues and perfects the work He then began. The one is a birth, the other a growth. The making of us practically holy is the design which God has in view when He quickens us: it is the necessary means to this end, for sanctification is the crown of the whole process of salvation.⁶

Of course we never arrive to full or complete sanctification in this life. The Christian life is one of continual battling against sin. We will not experience complete sanctification until we are delivered from these bodies at death. Here, again, are the words of **Arthur Pink in which he wrote of this life-long struggle:**

The fruit of the Spirit's sanctification of us experimentally, appears in our separation from evil and the world. But because of the flesh within, our walk is not perfect. Oftentimes there is little for the eye of sense to distinguish in those in whom the Spirit dwells from the moral and respectable worldlings; yea, often they put us to shame. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." "The world knoweth us not." But the heart is washed from the prevailing love of sin by the tears of repentance which the Christian is moved to frequently shed. Every new act of faith upon the cleansing blood of Christ carries forward the work of experimental sanctification to a further degree. As Naaman was required to dip in the Jordan again and again, yea, seven times, till he was wholly purged of his bodily leprosy; so the soul of the Christian—conscious of so much of the filth of sin still defiling him—continues to dip in that "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." Thank God, one day Christ will "present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27).⁷

III. Paul's teaching on sanctification in our text is focused on sexual immorality.

Now Paul addressed the need to be sanctified with respect to sexual morality. He wrote in **verses 3 and 4**, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor."

Actually *sexual immorality* is but one way in which sin may manifest itself in our experience. It is a major sin, but it is not the only sin. It is what may be termed a "root" sin. In other words, sexual immorality will lead a person into a number of related sins, if it is not checked in the heart and life. This sin does not stand still or alone, but will lead to other sins, such as uncleanness, dishonesty, lewdness, hardness of heart.

The Scriptures speak of other sins as "root" sins. *Greediness* is a root sin. Paul wrote to Timothy in **1 Timothy 6:8-10**,

⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For *the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil*, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

If a man is greedy, that is, if he has worldly, temporal values, or if he longs to be rich, he will be characterized by a variety of sins, all of which owe their origin to his greediness.

The Scriptures also speak of the sin of *bitterness* as a root sin. We read in **Hebrews 12:15 and 16**,

⁶ Arthur Pink, *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, PDF, pp. 75f.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 128f.

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest *any root of bitterness* springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

And so, sexual immorality, greediness, and bitterness, are all root sins. They are the cause and source of many other kinds of sins that people commit.

Sexual sin is a sin with respect to *one's own body*. We read in 1 Corinthians 6:18, "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." It is described in the Scriptures as "the lust of the flesh" (1 John 2:16)

Greed is a sin with respect to our relationship to *physical things*. This sin is described in the Scriptures as "the lust of the eyes" (also, 1 John 2:16)

Bitterness is a sin with respect to our relationship with *other people* (or God Himself). This sin is described in the Scriptures as "the pride of life" (again, 1 John 2:6).

And so, these three root sins may be seen as categories of sins as well. Virtually any sin we commit can probably be classified under one or more of these three headings. If you are able to have these three areas in submission to the Lord Jesus, if you have sexual lust under control, if you are content with what things you have and with what things you do not have, and further, if you have a clear conscience in the arena of your interpersonal relationships, you are a long way advanced in the process of sanctification in your life.

But again, the Apostle Paul's primary emphasis on sanctification in the passage before us is in the arena of sexual morality. Let us affirm several truths respecting this subject:

1. Sanctification in the arena of sexual morality is necessary in order to obtain eternal life.

Now we know and affirm very strongly that our justification before God is by God's grace alone through faith alone. In other words, faith in Jesus Christ alone results in God's declaration of the full forgiveness of sins and that he regards us as righteous due to the righteousness of Jesus Christ credited to us through faith alone. But it is wrong to believe or teach that all that is required of you to inherit salvation is to believe on the Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. Saving faith also believes on the Lord Jesus for the deliverance from the practice of sinning. And deliverance from the practice of sinning is absolutely necessary with regard to our salvation. Consider what the Holy Scriptures say about this matter:

1 Corinthians 6:9-20. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. *Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,* ¹⁰nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners *will inherit the kingdom of God.* ¹¹And such were some of you. But you were washed, *but you were sanctified*, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. ¹²All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. ¹³Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. *Now the body is not for sexual immorality* but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! ¹⁶Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For 'the two,' He says, 'shall become one flesh.' ¹⁷But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. ¹⁸*Flee sexual immorality.* Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Galatians 5:16-21. “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,* ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; *of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*”

Ephesians 5:5. “For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

Hebrews 13:4. “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”

Revelation 21:8. “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

1 John 3:6 (ESV). “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.”

1 John 3:9 (ESV). “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.”

1 John 5:18 (ESV). “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.”

We see that it is very clear in the Word of God that we must be sanctified with respect to sexual sin if we hope to inherit the kingdom of God, that is, if we hope to enjoy eternal life in the presence of God with His people in eternity.

Of course we must understand and affirm that...

2. God has sanctioned sexual relations within the relationship of a God-honoring marriage. Paul wrote of this in 1 Corinthians 7.

1 Corinthians 7:1-2. “Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: ‘It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.’ ²But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.”

God has ordained that only within a divinely sanctioned marriage is sexual relations blessed of God. Only within a marriage relationship can there be a true clear conscience in this matter. And a divinely instituted marriage is between one man and one woman for life. All sexual activity outside of this marriage relationship is sin, sin which will expose the perpetrators to divine judgment when they stand before Jesus Christ on the Last Day.

We also know that in God's world only sexual relations within a legitimate marriage can be truly fulfilling and satisfying. Sexual relations outside of a legitimate marriage relationship may bring pleasure for the short term, but it cannot truly satisfy. Elicit sinful activity cannot be accompanied with a clear conscience. It will not be ultimately satisfying, for after a short time the desire for more illicit sexual relations will arise in the heart. And over time if this sinful activity is indulged, it will result in the initial experiences being less stimulating and satisfying, and more egregious kinds of behavior will be desired and

probably practiced, in order to achieve the degree of excitement or arousal that early activity produced. Sin does not stand still. Sin will lead to more egregious acts of sin. And if it goes unchecked, a person will find himself one day desiring and doing things of which he had earlier not desired or perhaps had even condemned. Only in the marriage relationship that God has ordained is sexual activity blessed by God and truly satisfying to people.

We must very strongly affirm that...

3. Sexual immorality is totally inconsistent with our Christian profession

Romans 13:13. “Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.”

1 Corinthians 5:1. “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans...”

1 Corinthians 5:11. “But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler--not even to eat with such a one.”

1 Corinthians 10:8. “We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.”

Ephesians 5:2-3. “And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.”

But in spite of these admonitions, it is a very real and great problem among professing Christians. Why? **First**, we live in a corrupt, licentious society. Sexual immorality is not only widely and openly practiced in our culture, but it is often presented as a good thing to be celebrated. The standards of biblical conduct are no longer the standards of our society. Once they were, but they are no longer. And the result is that professing Christians may be found to have lowered their standards of what is acceptable in their lives. They excuse today, what they had rejected in earlier years.

A **second** reason that sexual immorality is a great problem among professing Christianity is that sexual immorality is continuously set before our population daily, through commercial marketing (sex sells), through its open display at the theatre, on television, in print, and online. And sexual sin is set forth before us as common, normal, even “healthy”, and inevitable. Immorality is often presented as “a badge of honor” or achievement, rather than as a cause for shame. Truly the Scriptural statement is true for people in our society--“whose glory is in their shame” (Phi 3:19).⁸ It could be said of our world today what was said of Noah’s world before the flood: “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).

A **third** reason that sexual immorality is a great problem among professing Christians is due to the free access to and abundance of pornography.⁹ Here are some old statistics on the problem of porn among evangelicals:

Christians, Pastors and Church Pornography Statistics

-- A 1996 Promise Keepers survey at one of their stadium events revealed that over 50% of the men in attendance were involved with pornography within one week of attending the event.

⁸ Actually, I believe in this verse Paul was referring to hypocrites, professing Christians.

⁹ To see the growth and extent of the problem of pornography on the internet, see <http://www.toptenreviews.com/internet-pornography-statistics/>.

- 51% of pastors say cyber-porn is a possible temptation. 37% say it is a current struggle (Christianity Today, Leadership Survey, 12/2001).
- Over half of evangelical pastors admits viewing pornography last year.
- Roger Charman of Focus on the Family's Pastoral Ministries reports that approximately 20 percent of the calls received on their Pastoral Care Line are for help with issues such as pornography and compulsive sexual behavior.
- In a 2000 Christianity Today survey, 33% of clergy admitted to having visited a sexually explicit Web site. Of those who had visited a porn site, 53% had visited such sites a few times in the past year, and 18% visit sexually explicit sites between a couple of times a month and more than once a week.
- 29% of born again adults in the U.S. feel it is morally acceptable to view movies with explicit sexual behavior (The Barna Group).
- 57% of pastors say that addiction to pornography is the most sexually damaging issue to their congregation (Christians and Sex Leadership Journal Survey, March 2005).

A **fourth** reason that sexual immorality is a great problem for professing Christians is that once a person has given himself/herself over to immorality, it is nearly impossible to break free from its enslaving power. Sinful behavior is not only damning and defiling, it is enslaving. Our Lord stated, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34).

Those who have studied the influence of pornography on people have identified...

Five Stages of Addiction

Early Exposure. Most guys who get addicted to porn start early. They see the stuff when they are very young, and it gets its foot in the door.

Addiction. Later comes addiction. You keep coming back to porn. It becomes a regular part of your life. You're hooked. You can't quit.

Escalation. After a while, escalation begins. You start to look for more and more graphic porn. You start using porn that would have disgusted you when you started. Now it excites you.

Desensitization. Eventually, you start to become numb. Even the most graphic, degrading porn doesn't excite you anymore. You become desperate to feel the same thrill again but can't find it.

Acting out sexually. At this point, many men make a dangerous jump and start acting out sexually. They move from the paper and plastic images of porn to the real world.¹⁰

A **fifth** reason that sexual immorality is a great problem for professing Christians is because this sin, as all forms of sin, resonates with the sin that dwells within us. This sin is dangerous to us because we have a natural affinity to it. "The heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). Within each of us there resides an affinity, an attraction, a hunger for sin, that if it is enticed, fed a few morsels, will become hungry for more and more. Our Lord Jesus taught,

¹⁴When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. ¹⁶If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

¹⁷When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. ¹⁸So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?" ²⁰And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²²thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within and defile a man." (Mark 7:14-23)

¹⁰ This is from Focus on the family at <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/divorce-and-infidelity/pornography-and-virtual-infidelity/stages-of-porn-addiction>

A **sixth** reason that sexual immorality is a great problem for professing Christians is that “solutions” are proposed by many that are unable to set people free from this sin. The Scriptures make it clear that sin is of such a nature that only the grace of God through Jesus Christ can set someone free from its power. Thankfully Christians have the promise of the Lord Jesus Himself: “if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:1). And there is no freedom, there is no liberty, as enriching and enjoyable than to be set free from the guilt, the defiling effects, and the power of sin so that we may live in righteousness, serving our Lord and others with a clear conscience!

3. How may a Christian experience sanctification in the arena of sexual morality?

Of course we can only experience sanctification from sin through God’s grace. We do not have the power, the ability, to sanctify ourselves. Sanctification is a work of God’s grace in our lives. Now God has appointed the means by which He bestows His grace to His people. What are these means of grace?

(1) We must humble ourselves to seek the Lord’s grace to help in our time of need. “Be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Pet. 5:5).

(2) We must believe and trust the Lord Jesus to do for us and in us that which we are unable to do. We must acknowledge our inability, our helplessness to break free of sin. The Holy Scriptures reveal throughout its pages that sinful people need a King after God’s own heart who alone can enable them to live a life of righteousness.

(3) We must pray and trust the Lord Jesus to give us the Holy Spirit to enable us to have the desire and ability to resist temptation to sin or to break free from the present practice of sin. “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom 8:13).

(4) We must purpose to avoid or “flee from” those people or occasions that would lead us to yield to sin. “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body” (1 Cor. 6:18).

(5) Similarly, we must resolve, through the Lord’s help, to avoid those places or situations where we might be tempted to sin. If the computer or “smart” phone leads you to sin, either commit not to use them in private, or get rid of them altogether.

Again, we live in days when the scourge of pornography is readily available. It has proven to be a snare to many. We must put away from us any source of temptation that may put us at risk. We should resolve by the grace of God to only fix our eyes and hearts upon that which God has sanctioned in His Word. We should be as Job, who wrote, “I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?” (Job 31:1).

(6) Similarly, we must resolve, through the Lord’s help, to avoid those places or situations where we might be tempted to sin. The book of Proverbs speaks of a young man and the danger he put himself in by being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

My son, keep my words,
And treasure my commands within you.
²Keep my commands and live,
And my law as the apple of your eye.
³Bind them on your fingers;
Write them on the tablet of your heart.

⁴Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
 And call understanding your nearest kin,
⁵That they may keep you from the immoral woman,
 From the seductress who flatters with her words.
⁶For at the window of my house
 I looked through my lattice,
⁷And saw among the simple,
 I perceived among the youths,
 A young man devoid of understanding,
⁸Passing along the street near her corner;
 And he took the path to her house
⁹In the twilight, in the evening,
 In the black and dark night.
¹⁰And there a woman met him,
 With the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart.
¹¹She was loud and rebellious,
 Her feet would not stay at home.
¹²At times she was outside, at times in the open square,
 Lurking at every corner.
¹³So she caught him and kissed him;
 With an impudent face she said to him:
¹⁴"I have peace offerings with me;
 Today I have paid my vows.
¹⁵So I came out to meet you,
 Diligently to seek your face,
 And I have found you.
¹⁶I have spread my bed with tapestry,
 Colored coverings of Egyptian linen.
¹⁷I have perfumed my bed
 With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
¹⁸Come, let us take our fill of love until morning;
 Let us delight ourselves with love.
¹⁹For my husband is not at home;
 He has gone on a long journey;
²⁰He has taken a bag of money with him,
 And will come home on the appointed day."
²¹With her enticing speech she caused him to yield,
 With her flattering lips she seduced him.
²²Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter,
 Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks,
²³Till an arrow struck his liver.
 As a bird hastens to the snare,
 He did not know it would cost his life. (Prov. 7:21-23)

(7) We should purpose to be accountable to someone whom we know has our best interests on his heart.

(8) Purpose to conform your thinking and practice to the Word of God, using the means that God has appointed to curtail temptation.

(9) We should understand that ultimately, only the Lord Jesus has the authority, has the ability, to set people free from sin. He must be sought, trusted, submitted to, and obeyed. Only He has the power to deliver His people from their sin. And further, only He has the power to restore formerly defiled, damaged,

and deranged souls to experience joy, peace, and righteousness, to enjoy life as God intended for people, life more abundant.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
(Rom. 15:13)

The classic treatment of John Owen, the puritan, on the mortification of sin is the most thorough treatment on the subject.

ON THE MORTIFICATION OF SIN IN BELIEVERS;
THE NECESSITY, NATURE, AND MEANS OF IT:
WITH A RESOLUTION OF SUNDRY CASES OF CONSCIENCE THEREUNTO BELONGING.
BY JOHN OWEN, D.D.,

A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL.

Preface

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- Chapter 2 - The principal assertion concerning the necessity of mortification proposed
- Chapter 3 - The Spirit the only author of this work
- Chapter 4. The vigour and comfort of our spiritual lives depend on our mortification
- Chapter 5 - The principal intendment of the whole discourse proposed.
- Chapter 6 - The mortification of sin in particular described
- Chapter 7 - General rules, without which no lust will be mortified
- Chapter 8 - Universal sincerity
- Chapter 9 - Consider the dangerous symptoms of any lust
- Chapter 10 - The guilt, the danger, and the evil of sin
- Chapter 11 - Five directions
- Chapter 12 - Thoughtfulness of the excellency of the majesty of God
- Chapter 13 - Precautions against false peace
- Chapter 14 - The necessity of faith on Christ
