

The Spirit Empowers Us for Victory

Scripture: Romans 8:12–13

Code: 45-58

INTRODUCTION

Only God has the capability to fill our life with song. Only He can save and redeem us. As a result we owe Him a tremendous debt. That's why Paul said, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:12-13).

REVIEW

The Holy Spirit does several things to prove that we as believers will never be condemned for our sin: He frees us from sin and death (Rom. 8:2-3), enables us to fulfill God's law (v. 4), and changes our nature (vv. 5-11). We are not under condemnation because we have been made new: the Spirit of God regenerates us spiritually. Verse 11 promises us that someday He will also regenerate us physically.

LESSON

Verses 12-13 tell us that the Holy Spirit also empowers us for victory over the flesh. That's similar to His enabling us to fulfill God's law, but it doesn't focus as much on what the Holy Spirit does for us as on what we do as we allow the Holy Spirit to accomplish His work in us. That's indicated by the phrases "we are debtors" and "[we must] mortify the deeds of the body." God calls us to deal with sin in our lives, and He never asks us to do something He doesn't enable us to do--that would be futile.

I. THE MEANS OF ACHIEVING VICTORY

If we are going to achieve victory over sin, it will be through the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 13). If we didn't have the Spirit's supernatural power in our lives, we would be unable to overcome the flesh--to kill sin--because the flesh can't overcome flesh. Sin can't gain victory over sin. We must be transformed first (vv. 5-11). Once we have within us the life of God in the presence of His indwelling Spirit, we have power to overcome the flesh. In Romans 7:18 Paul says, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." Paul recognized that apart from God, there was within himself no resource for doing good. That's true for all of us--we have no capacity to gain victory over the flesh on our own.

Romans 8:5-8 says, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Apart from the Holy Spirit's power, a person is controlled by a debilitating corruption. An unregenerate person has no capacity to deal with sin in a manner pleasing to God. But when the Spirit enters a person's life, that changes. With His presence comes the capacity to overcome the flesh.

A. Using the Weapons of the Spirit

1. 2 Corinthians 10:1-5--"I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you--but I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, with which I think to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war

after the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds)" (vv. 1-4). We are not superhuman; we live in fleshly bodies. But God has given us powerful weapons to fight against sin, and they are available through the power of the Holy Spirit. Those weapons are able to cast down "imagination, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and [bring] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (v. 5). Paul did not conduct himself according to the flesh. Even though he lived in a human body, he fought with spiritual weapons.

2. Romans 7:24-25--Verses 14-23 chronicle Paul's struggle to do what was right. In verse 24 he laments, "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Paul suffered tremendous anxiety because he loved God's truth and wanted to obey God. Yet he found within himself a power that held him back. He summed up his struggle in verse 25: "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin." We all experience that same struggle. But our anxiety will be resolved when we realize we can have victory over the flesh because we have weapons that are not fleshly but mighty and spiritual.

B. Walking in the Spirit

Galatians 5:17 says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The flesh and the Spirit battle against each other. But verses 24-25 tell us how to resolve that battle: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." The battle is resolved as we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

When you became a Christian, the Spirit of God entered into your life. With Him came the power of God, which is mighty enough to tear down anything that exalts itself against God. You have an internal resource that enables you to have victory over Satan, demons, and the flesh so you can bring everything in your life into obedience to Christ.

Even You Can Be Perfect!

This may shock you, but you actually have the potential to be perfect. Now in this life you won't always experience victory over sin, but that's not because you don't have the power for victory but because you don't appropriate it. Your potential to be perfect is debilitated by the power of the flesh. Nevertheless, it is still there. The Greek word translated "power" in the New Testament is dunamis, from which we get dynamite. The power of God is like dynamite in your life!

C. Being Filled With the Spirit

The key to victory is appropriating the power you already have. Ephesians 5:18 says, "Be not drunk with wine, in which is excess [Gk., asotia, "dissipation"], but be filled with the Spirit." That means you must continuously allow the Holy Spirit to permeate your life: you think His thoughts, feel His feelings, and obey His will.

When you are filled with the Spirit, you are controlled by Him. A person is controlled by whatever fills his mind. An adage referring to computers says, "Garbage in, garbage out." Likewise, whatever you put into your mind is going to control your behavior. If you let the Spirit of God control your mind, it will be renewed in the Spirit and you will manifest godly behavior.

"Be filled with the Spirit" is not a command to fall into a trance or have an ecstatic experience; it simply means you are to allow your life to be controlled by the Spirit. The Greek word translated "filled" (pleroo) is often used in the gospels about being filled with a particular attitude or feeling such as hate, bitterness, or rage. When a person is filled with hate, he is dominated by it. Most of the time we maintain an equilibrium between anger and happiness. But once we become filled with anger, we lose our equilibrium and become totally controlled by that emotion. Similarly, a Christian is to be totally under the control of the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:19-21 lists the results of being filled with the Spirit: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms

and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things ... submitting yourselves one to another." Every relationship you have will be affected when you are filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:21; 6:9).

Colossians 3 is a parallel, condensed version of Ephesians 5:18--6:9. Verse 16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Notice that the results are the same as those from being filled with the Spirit. You will speak in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (v. 16); give thanks (v. 17); and relationships among husbands and wives (vv. 18-19), children and parents (vv. 20-21), and servants and masters (3:22; 4:1) will be positively affected. The only apparent difference between Colossians 3:16; 4:1 and Ephesians 5:18; 6:9 is what produces the results. If you get the same results from letting "the word of Christ dwell in you" as you do when you are "filled with the Spirit," then they both must be the same thing.

If you want to live a Spirit-filled life, don't look for ecstatic experiences. Rather, align your life under the Word of God. As you saturate your soul, heart, and mind with God's truth, you will manifest Spirit-controlled behavior. That's why studying God's precious truth is such a great priority. When you are saturated with God's Word your involuntary responses will be are godly no matter what may happen to you. Now it's comparatively easy to control your voluntary responses. You may think, I want to be careful how I react in this situation. I want others to think I'm spiritual. But if someone were to slam you against a wall, you wouldn't have time to think about your reaction. Therefore, you want your involuntary responses to be godly. Living a Spirit-filled life requires a day-by-day awareness of God's Word. You need to meditate on it and let it control your thinking and behavior.

You have the power to kill sin because of the Spirit's presence in you. Don't think you can't overcome sin. The Holy Spirit's power is in you and you need to appropriate it.

II. THE PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE VICTORY

Romans 8:12 says, "Brethren, we are debtors." The people who experience victory over sin are those who know and love the Lord. Unbelievers will never know victory. Although they may be involved in a religious system that gives them apparent piety on the outside, they will never know ultimate victory over the flesh. Some immoral people want to feel better about themselves, so they act morally; others don't care about appearing moral. But it's not the presence or absence of morality that ultimately has anything to do with eternal life; it is whether a person knows God through Jesus Christ.

The residual image of God in people makes them want to be moral. Even the most immoral unbelievers want to escape from their problems, but they don't know how. The mental institutions and hospitals of our country are filled with people who are sick of their internal debilitation. They can't have meaningful relationships, nor can they adapt to their circumstances with a sense of true joy. Only those who are in God's family can experience victory over the corruption of the flesh.

III. THE PRIVILEGE OF VICTORY

A. Identifying the Privilege

The first word in verse 12 is "Therefore." That's significant because it indicates a point is about to be made from what was previously said. Because we have been delivered from sin and death and enjoy the blessings of righteousness in Christ, a new nature, spiritual giftedness, hope, joy, peace, love, and everything else we have in Christ, we are therefore debtors to God.

All New Testament exhortation is based on privilege. For example, in Romans 12:1 Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." Based on God's mercy, which Paul examined in the first eleven chapters of Romans, he implored believers to make the necessary sacrifices in serving God. In the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul expounded on the privileges of a being Christian. Then he said, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy" (4:1). After discussing our Christian privileges

in the first four chapters of Galatians, Paul said, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (5:1). Because of what Christ has done for us, we are privileged to be able to respond to Him.

Exhortation is always based on an understanding of privilege. We must know what God has done for us before we can understand why we should obey. We can't just browbeat people into submitting to God's laws without telling them what God has done for them.

B. Ignoring the Privilege

When the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, they sent ten spies to investigate. When they returned, most of them had what I call the Grasshopper Complex: they saw the people in the land as if they were giants and themselves as grasshoppers in comparison. They didn't believe they could conquer them with or without God's help (Num. 13:33). But Caleb said that God promised to deliver the land to them, and that they should take it (v. 30). Some of us are like the Israelites: God has given us promises, but we don't act on them. We need to remember the power and privileges we have as God's people and claim the promises that He has given us.

IV. THE PATTERN FOR VICTORY

Romans 8:13 says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

A. Stated

1. Don't live according to the flesh

The pattern for victory is not to live "after the flesh." We owe nothing to it. What did it ever do for us? Nothing good.

As Christians we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. And Romans 8:5 says, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." If you are not fleshly, why would you want to act fleshly? It would be ridiculous for you to say, "I'm not a murderer, but I enjoy acting like one," or "I'm not a homosexual, but I like to act like it." Why would you want to act like something you are not?

The flesh is the ugly complex of fallen human desires. It involves motive, affection, principle, purpose, and everything else that evil generates within you. To live after the flesh means to be ruled by it. Since you, as a believer, walk in the Spirit, it would be contradictory for you to think you owe something to the flesh. You have been freed from sin and death. You have been made a new creation and need no longer to live after the flesh.

a) The reason Romans 8:13 states, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Verse 6 likewise says, "To be carnally minded is death." People who are without Christ are spiritually dead and they are headed toward eternal death. They mind the things of the flesh and walk in the flesh. They are unable to please God and will be eternally separated from Him. There is no reason for you to act like an unbeliever.

Romans 8:12-13 is one of many self-examination passages in Scripture. Such passages call us to look at our lives to determine if we are saved. The person who is habitually dominated by his sin nature is unsaved and spiritually dead. Someone said to me, "There's a man I know who says he's a Christian, but I don't believe him. He has no desire for the things of the Lord and habitually seeks the things of the flesh." I replied, "That man's claim is meaningless by the test of Scripture. If a person lives after the flesh, he gives evidence that he is on the way to eternal death." No Christian can live like that. Ephesians 2:10 says we were "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." b) The relapse Can a Christian ever do something fleshly? Yes. There will be times when a believer will lapse into bad behavior. Paul said, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions" (1 Cor. 3:1-3). In Romans 7 Paul gives a personal account of the battle all Christians have with sin--sometimes we win; sometimes we lose. But the primary disposition of a believer is toward the things of the Spirit. c)

The resolve Paul stated his resolve to live after Christ this way: "[I want to] be found in him, not having mine own righteousness ... but that which is through the faith of Christ.... that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil. 3:9-10). Paul wanted to know Christ, His resurrection power, and His sufferings to the fullest extent. Nevertheless, he didn't want to act like he was already perfect (v. 12). Paul knew he was saved by grace but also wanted to live out his salvation with all his heart. He refused to let his flesh hold him back. In verses 13-14 he says, "I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul had a tremendous passion to know God, enjoy fellowship with Christ, and use all the power available to him. That was the bent of his life, even though there were times when he was interrupted in that pursuit by his flesh. Every Christian who seeks the things of God will struggle with sin. But if you live habitually after the flesh, you give evidence of being on your way to eternal death. The presence of holiness is absolutely necessary for any Christian. The pattern for victory is to owe nothing to the flesh. As Paul said, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer in it?... We are buried with [Christ] by baptism into death, that as [He] was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:1-4).

2. Live according to the Spirit

In Romans 8:13 Paul says, "If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." That is a fact. It is valid to examine a person's salvation on the basis of his or her behavior. You can look at salvation from two perspectives: God's sovereignty and the individual's behavior. Here Paul speaks from the perspective of behavior.

a) Pursue the Spirit It is characteristic of a Christian to pursue the things of the Spirit and kill the flesh. There will be times when he fails to do that, but generally he will desire the things of God and remove sin from his life. Righteous living assures a believer of his salvation. No other argument for his security is as convincing as having victory over sin (2 Pet. 1:5-10). You can be sure you're a Christian in two ways: by believing God's Word that your faith in Christ is what saves you (cf. Rom. 10:9-10) and experiencing victory over sin. b) Purge sin Romans 8:13 says we must kill the deeds of the body. The body represents our flesh. Sin tempts us through the body--through our eyes and ears. Throughout Romans 6 and 7 Paul refers to the flesh and the body of sin. Our sin is in our flesh, and our minds and feelings are a part of our flesh. We should constantly be killing the deeds of the flesh through the Spirit's power. The Greek word translated "mortify" in Romans 8:13 is used in 1 Peter 3:18 to refer to Christ's death. We are to kill sin dead by the power of the Spirit. When God told King Saul to destroy the Amalekites, he disobeyed by sparing their king and some animals (1 Sam. 15:2-23). We're not to do that with sin--we must kill it for sure. We can't leave any bleating sheep in our lives to betray our disobedience (1 Sam. 15:14). Many Christians retain certain sins in their lives because they don't want to kill them. Colossians 3 says, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.... Mortify [Kill], therefore, your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desire, and covetousness.... But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (vv. 1-9). If you belong to Christ, you must seek out and destroy the residual sins that are in you. When you came to Christ and had your sins forgiven, your responsibility to kill off sin began. You will spend the rest of your life doing that. It will be difficult--just when you think you've conquered a problem it will pop up again. However, some give the impression that it's easy. I call them the "deeper-life people." They appear as if they've ascended to a level where conflict with sin never occurs. That's impossible in this life because sin is always at work in the human heart. Don't be fooled when it appears as if you've wiped out sin in your life. Puritan John

Owen warned that sin is never less quiet than when it seems to be most quiet, and its waters are for the most part deep, when they are still (cf. Sin & Temptation [Portland: Multnomah, 1983], p. xxi). Sin would love to lull you into thinking you're OK. Although you may not steal, murder, or commit fornication, if you don't deal with anger, bitterness, and ill will in your life, you won't experience true victory. Your battle with sin will go on as long as you live, but you can experience victory.

B. Specified

Don't let anyone tell you he or she has reached complete consecration. Anyone who claims that is self-deceived (1 John 1:8). Practical sanctification will continue as long as we live. The following are some practical ways to kill sin in your life.

1. Recognize the presence of sin in your flesh

The apostle Paul admitted, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Rom. 7:21). Even if you are a pastor, deacon, elder, or a Bible study teacher, don't live under the illusion that sin isn't in your life. Paul said of himself, "Oh, wretched man that I am!" (v. 24). You will never know victory over sin until you recognize its presence in your life.

You have to know your enemy before you can kill it. How sad that many of us never search out the poison in our lives. We seldom look at the Word of God, meditate and pray over it, asking, "God, search me and know my heart" (cf. Ps. 139:23-24). In that Psalm David was asking God to let him see the corruption that was in him so he could fight it. We, on the other hand, tend to allow sin to camouflage itself. We'll shrug it off by claiming to have a weakness in a certain area. The truth is, however, we don't hate sin as much as we should. Once we allow sin a foothold in one area, it will affect all areas of our lives.

Sin will manifest itself one way or another through anger, bitterness, unkind thoughts, criticism, pride, self-conceit, lack of understanding, impatience, weak prayers, faithlessness in the study of God's Word, lack of fellowship, or a resistance to worship. It's imperative that we discover our weaknesses. Twice Haggai the prophet said, "Consider your ways" (Hag. 1:5, 7). First Kings 8:38 says, "Know every man the plague of his own heart."

2. Fix your heart on God

In Psalm 57:7 David wrote, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed." His heart was undivided and committed to God. Paul expressed the same thing when he said, "[Oh] that I may know [Christ]" (Phil. 3:10). Psalm 119:6 says, "I shall not be ashamed when I look upon all Thy commandments" (NASB). If I obey all God's commandments, I will never have reason to be ashamed. Fix your heart on the Lord by learning how to worship Him. That will act as a preservative against a shameful life.

3. Meditate on God's Word

The psalmist said, "Thy word have I hidden in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11). Don't just read a page from your Bible, close the text, and forget it. That's not meditating on God's Word.

Some people wonder how I get so much from the Bible. When I merely read it, I forget what I read, too. To get to know the Bible I spend hour after hour reading one portion of Scripture until my soul is inextricably woven with what I've read. Once I've done that, I meditate on the thoughts that passage brings to mind night and day. As you meditate on God's Word, it ferrets out of your life the sins it condemns.

4. Pray diligently

First Peter 4:7 tells us to "watch unto prayer." We are to pray diligently. When I'm studying God's Word, it's difficult to separate where my studying ends and my meditating and praying begin. Commune with God when you read, meditate, and pray over His Word.

True prayer will have a strong element of confession. You need to recognize the vileness of sin. When you confess your sin to God, you renew your hatred of it. Don't be concerned only with gross sins--confess any sin in your life. John Owen said, "He who pleads with God for the remission of sin also pleads with his own heart to detest it" (Sin & Temptation, p. 47). When you pray about the sin in

your life, you remind yourself that God hates it and that you also should hate it. Prayer becomes a source of strength in times of need (Heb. 4:16). If you are honest enough with God to confess your sin, you will find the strength to kill it. Don't think that just because you kill some sins now you will be free from them forever. But you will see their recurrence decrease over time.

When you come before God in prayer, you open yourself up to Him. He will reveal your heart to you and unmask the sins you normally don't see. Unless you spend that kind of honest time with God, you will never uncover the hidden sins in your life.

5. Have a passion to obey God

You ought to have a consuming passion to obey God. First Peter 1:22 says, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." When you obey God, you purify your heart. There's nothing mystical about experiencing victory over sin: when you are tempted, you can choose to either sin or obey God. When you obey God you kill sin and purify your heart.

C. Sustained

Despite knowing the pattern for victory, it's still hard to kill sin. It's especially difficult to eliminate a problem you've had all your life. You'll be tempted to become frustrated when continually dealing with a problem, but fight that by knowing that in time you'll notice more frequent victories and less frequent failures.

How to Confirm Your Salvation

When I first came to Grace Church, I was only twenty-nine and still young in my spiritual development. I went through a time when I wondered if I was really saved. I understood theologically how a person became saved--that wasn't the problem. I had not yet seen evidence in my life of maturity in Christ, and I wasn't consistently defeating sin. While attending college and seminary I was busy learning facts, but I wasn't growing much spiritually. But once I got involved in the ministry at Grace Church, my spiritual growth skyrocketed. Since then, I have never doubted my salvation. It wasn't my theology that confirmed my salvation. Knowing I was getting rid of sin in my life is what confirmed God's presence in me.

When you become more successful at killing sin in your life through God's power, your hatred for it will increase. Consequently, the sins you still struggle with will seem worse than the many you had before you became a Christian. Your battle with sin will continue as long as you live. Don't let anyone tell you he has learned how to stop struggling with sin. No one attains perfection until he dies.

Growing in grace (2 Pet. 3:18), perfecting holiness (2 Cor. 7:1), and renewing the inner man (2 Cor. 4:16) are simply other ways of referring to killing sin. You don't grow by gaining biblical knowledge; you grow by applying it. It pains me to see people who do not apply what they learn about God because they won't experience victory over sin.

Are You Defeating Sin?

Here's what you need to consider:

1. How is your zeal for God?

Has sin made your heart cold toward God? How much do you desire to worship and commune with Him? The psalmist wrote, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law" (Ps. 119:136). Do you feel like crying when you or others disobey God? You should be consumed with the desire to obey God and glorify His name.

2. How much do you love God's Word and prayer?

Your greatest joys should be reading the Bible and praying to the Lord.

3. How much do you love to be with God's people?

Spending time with fellow Christians should be a higher priority than personal recreation. Don't be like the Jewish people of Malachi's day who grew weary of serving God and said, "Behold, what a weariness is it!" (Mal. 1:13).

4. How sensitive are you to sin?

Can you say with David, "Zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of those who reproached thee are fallen upon me" (Ps. 69:9)? Do you grieve when there is sin in your or someone else's life?

In Romans 13:14 Paul says, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."

V. OUR GRATITUDE FOR VICTORY

Romans 8:12 says, "We are debtors, not to the flesh." That implies we are debtors to the Spirit. You and I should be so humbled by what God has done for us that we want to repay Him. Although we will never be able to do that, we can show our gratitude. Jesus bought us with His own precious blood. He paid the supreme price to regenerate us and bring us into His family. Our debt to Him is to live after the Spirit.

Paul wrote Philemon to ask him to take back a wayward slave named Onesimus who had recently become a Christian. He said, "Thou owest unto me even thine own self" (v. 19). If Paul could say that to Philemon, how much more could Christ say that to us!

Luke 17:10 says, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." All that we are and ever hope to be makes us debtors to Christ. The longer we have been saved the greater our debt to Him. The message of Romans 8:12-13 is simple: we are to kill the sin in our lives.

When Julius Caesar was murdered, the people of Rome were enraged and took revenge on his assassins. They burned their homes and possessions. Many of the conspirators were killed. Remind yourself constantly that sin killed the Lord Jesus Christ. May the passion you have against sin be as intense as the passion the Roman people had against those who killed Caesar.

Focusing on the Facts

1. What does Romans 8:12-13 focus on? How is that indicated? Explain.
2. Why wouldn't we be able to kill sin without the Holy Spirit's presence in us?
3. What are the weapons the Spirit has given us capable of doing (2 Cor. 10:5)?
4. How can we resolve the battle between the flesh and the Spirit?
5. Why do we not always experience victory over sin?
6. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?
7. Explain why being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and letting the Word of Christ dwell in you (Col. 3:16) are the same thing.
8. What does living a Spirit-filled life require?
9. Who experiences victory over sin?
10. Discuss the privileges believers have as a result of what Christ has done.
11. What did Paul mean when he said, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die" (Rom. 8:13)?
12. According to Philippians 3:11-14 how did Paul live?
13. What is the most convincing proof of a believer's salvation (2 Pet. 1:5-10)?
14. What does the word "mortify" in Romans 8:13 indicate regarding sin?
15. Will you ever ascend to a level in this life where conflict with sin never occurs? Explain.
16. What is the first thing you must do to kill sin?
17. What does it mean to have your heart fixed on God?
18. What is the benefit of meditating on Scripture?
19. What must true prayer include? What does that help you to do?
20. What are the benefits of prayer?
21. Although we could never pay the debt we owe for our salvation, what should we do?

Pondering the Principles

1. Is your life under the control of the Holy Spirit and God's Word? Can you honestly say that your heart, soul, and mind are saturated with God's truth? Living a Spirit-filled life is the key to having victory over sin. When you meditate on God's Word it controls your mind, which controls your behavior. Write a list of the sins you need to deal with in your life. Next to each write out Scripture passages referring to that particular sin. Meditate on those passages this week so they will automatically come to mind whenever you need to deal with a specific sin.
2. Write down all the privileges you enjoy as a result of Christ's death on the cross--privileges that apply now and in the future. What should be your response to God for all those blessings? Don't ever take those great privileges for granted!
3. Read Philippians 3:13-14. Paul wanted to progress toward perfection. How much effort do you expend toward living a holy life? Read the following verses and specify the command that appears in each one: Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 5:8-11, Philippians 2:12-15, 2 Timothy 2:19-21, and 1 Peter 2:11-12. Are you living out each command? Do you see in your life the results of obeying them all?
4. Review the section on the practical ways to kill sin in your life (pp. 12-14). Examine your life carefully to see if you are applying each in a consistent manner. As you read, make a list of the things you need to work on so you can better resist sin. As another means of resisting sin, commit to memory this stanza of Charles Wesley's hymn "Soldiers of Christ, Arise":
Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul;
Take ev'ry virtue, ev'ry grace, and fortify the whole.
From strength to strength go on, wrestle and fight and pray;
Tread all the pow'rs of darkness down and win the well-fought day.

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