

Lessons in Spiritual Lethality Part II

3.30.25

Message 30

Romans Series

Romans 8:11–17 (CSB)

¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal bodies to life through his Spirit who lives in you.

¹²So then, brothers and sisters, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh, ¹³because if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. **But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** ¹⁴For all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "*Abba*, Father!" ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, ¹⁷and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

1. If we let the flesh live, we are dead.

A. The Apostle Paul is bold, divisive, and clear.

1. You are either living for the Lord, or you are not.
2. You are either following your flesh or you are following the Spirit.

B. The struggle we have is that the Apostle Paul doesn't give us steps on how to put to death the deeds of the Body.

1. He actually assumes that his audience knows what this entails.

2. He takes for granted that the normal, ordinary teaching and discipleship the Romans have been embracing covers this.

3. But for us today, this isn't as widely known.

a. This morning, I want to help make this clear for us.

b. And some of the clearest instruction is from one of Paul's other letters in Ephesians.

C. We put to death the flesh by:

1. Eating the Book.

2. Engaging God in prayerful conversation.

3. Worshipping.

4. Fasting and Abstaining from lesser things to embrace the Lord.

5. We must embrace truth telling and truth receiving.

D. The Apostle Paul reveals five more practices that assist us in putting down the flesh from Ephesians 4.

2. Lessons in spiritual lethality.

How do we become lethal in subduing the flesh?

Ephesians 4:25-32 (CSB)

²⁵Therefore, putting away lying, **speak the truth, each one to his neighbor**, because we are members of one another. ²⁶**Be angry and do not sin.** Don't let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and don't give the devil an opportunity. ²⁸Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. ³⁰And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. ³²And be kind and

compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

#6. We must control our anger. Eph 4:26

²⁶ **Be angry and do not sin.** Don't let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and don't give the devil an opportunity.

A. The good news:

1. Anger is not a sin.
2. Anger is a God-given emotion.
3. God gets angry, Jesus got angry, and the Spirit, in His grieving, gets angry.

B. What we do in our anger determines if we are feeding the flesh or killing it.

1. Where do you go with your anger?
 2. God is the only one who can handle your anger without being damaged.
 - a. When I take my anger out on my spouse, I hurt her.
 - b. When I take my anger out on my dog, I place my anger on something that cannot help me.
 - c. When I throw things, punch walls, or slam doors in my anger, I am directing my anger to objects who have no ability to show me grace, empathy, concern, or love.
 3. Only God can handle my anger.
 - a. When I'm angry, when I want to defend myself but can't when people post on Facebook about me or send text messages about my decisions, the only proper direction for my anger is to Jesus.
1. The sin is not in the anger.
 2. The sin is in the direction.

b. Only Jesus has shoulders big enough to handle my anger.

4. That is why King David wrote the imprecatory Psalms, calling for the destruction of His enemies.

a. If David had asked his generals or armies to defend him, they would have and would have destroyed people's lives.

b. Instead, he would write out his anger and frustration and take them to God.

a. David would ask that God would defend him.

b. David took the anger and placed it on the shoulders of God.

c. Many of us here take our anger to friends, Facebook, public forums, and other avenues because we don't want to trust God with our anger.

1. We want someone to hurt that person because you were hurt.

2. You want someone to step in and fix the problem.

3. You don't want vengeance to belong to God, your flesh wants it for itself.

a. When we are really angry, we are afraid that God will forgive them.

b. We are afraid that God will forget about vengeance and justice and that the person who hurt me won't ever hurt for what they did for me.

C. In your anger, do not sin but instead bring it to Jesus.

1. Anger is often one of the last pieces of the flesh to die.

2. Because we can be angry, and nobody notices.

3. We can feel angry and justified at the same time.
4. But do not sin by taking your anger to those who cannot carry it.
5. Bring it to Jesus.

How do we become lethal in subduing the flesh?

#7. We must give the devil no opportunity or foothold.

A. This is directly tied to lying and anger.

²⁶ **Be angry and do not sin.** Don't let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and don't give the devil an opportunity.

1. If you let anger stay for very long, anger tailors itself to fit you.
2. Putting on anger feels right and maybe a little comfortable, or at least familiar.

B. **The "sins of maturity" are the hardest to go.**

1. Here's what I mean by this.
2. We reach a point in our Christian life where the biggest sins have been dealt with.
 - a. Our lives are not characterized by fornication or adultery.
 - b. We haven't murdered anyone for a while.
 - c. We aren't stealing.
 - d. It's like demoing a house:
 1. The easiest part of our demo is over.
 2. We knocked out the cabinets in the kitchen and threw out the things we could easily reach.
 3. But now we have to get behind the walls and replace electrical, change out plumbing and crawl

under the house and deal with sill plates and foundation issues.

3. For the person who has been a believer for a long time, we are more likely to give the enemy a foothold in the areas of:

- a. Gossip.
- b. Jealousy.
- c. Anger.
- d. Envy.
- e. Disobedience to the Spirit's promptings.

C. Our downfall, the giving into the flesh, most often begins not with the illicit drug, the pornographic image, or the adulterous bedroom.

- 1. It usually begins with anger.
- 2. It usually begins with gossip or jealousy.
- 3. It begins with small entertainments of the flesh:
 - a. small concessions to its desires;
 - b. small lapses of character and integrity.
- 4. Before you know it, those small footholds have given the enemy full voice at your table.

D. A song by Casting Crowns, called "Slow Fade" captures this beautifully. [Here are the lyrics:](#)

Be careful little eyes what you see

It's the second glance that ties your hands

As darkness pulls the strings

Be careful little feet where you go

For it's the little feet behind you

That are sure to follow

It's a slow fade

When you give yourself away

It's a slow fade

When black and white have turned to grey

And thoughts invade, choices made

A price will be paid

When you give yourself away

People never crumble in a day

Be careful little ears what you hear

When flattery leads to compromise

The end is always near

Be careful little lips what you say

For empty words and promises

Lead broken hearts astray

When black and white have turned to grey

And thoughts invade, choices made

A price will be paid

When you give yourself away

People never crumble in a day

The journey from your mind to your hands

Is shorter than you're thinking

Be careful if you think you stand

You just might be sinking

And it's a slow fade

When you give yourself away

It's a slow fade

When black and white have turned to grey

And thoughts invade, choices made

A price will be paid

When you give yourself away

People never crumble in a day (slow fade)

Daddies never crumble in a day (slow fade)

Families never crumble in a day

Oh, be careful little eyes what you see

Oh, be careful little eyes what you see

For the Father up above is looking down in love

Oh, be careful little eyes what you see¹

We cannot give the enemy a foothold or opportunity in our lives.

How do we become lethal in subduing the flesh?

#8. Don't be lazy.

²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need.

A. We know that stealing is a sin.

1. Thieves do not enter the Kingdom of God.

2. The Apostle Paul included thieves and swindlers in the list of people who have no inheritance in the Kingdom of God.

¹ Source: Musixmatch Songwriters: John Mark Hall Slow Fade lyrics © Be Essential Songs. 2007

1 Corinthians 6:9–10 (CSB)

⁹ Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males, ¹⁰ no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom.

3. As we will see in the next verses of Romans 8, we become children of God by being adopted into the family.

a. Children of God have an inheritance.

b. If you don't have an inheritance, you aren't in the family.

c. Paul lists thieves among those who are not God's children.

B. Most of us don't struggle with outright thievery.

1. Yet, this still applies.

2. There are other ways we allow the flesh to live related to our work and vocation.

C. Do we not steal when...

1. When we give to others what belongs to God, like our tithes, worship, time, and talent? (this is idolatry)

2. When we give to people what belongs to our spouse or kids? (adultery)

3. God gives us work to do, and we delay or disobey?

D. Work was not part of the curse but part of the design.

1. God created us to do a good work.

2. When we direct energy, time, or finances intended for God toward a lesser thing, that is theft.

E. Furthermore, when we are not engaged in work, we get in trouble.

1. The old saying, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop," is true.
2. King David exemplified this when the Bible says, "At the time when Kings go off to war, David stayed home."
3. This opened the door to his affair with Bathsheba.
 - a. When you are not doing what you are supposed to do, you will do what you are not supposed to do.
 - b. The greatest temptations for men come when we are bored, stressed, hungry, and tired.
4. That is why we must be busy with the Father's business.

How do we become lethal in subduing the flesh?

#9. We must watch our mouth.

²⁹ No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear.

A. The tongue is the hardest part of our bodies to contain.

1. The tongue also gives away the true condition of our heart.
2. Jesus said out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

B. What is classified as foul language?

1. There are words that we all recognize that are considered to be profanity.
2. But notice the definitions for the biblical word Paul used:
 - a. "of such poor quality as to be of little or no value, bad, not good."² (inferior)

² William Arndt et al., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 913.

b. “bad or unwholesome to the extent of being harmful,
bad, evil, unwholesome,”³

c. In Hebrew and even Latin, profane means to pollute what is holy.

3. Foul language and Profanity are words that:

a. have little to no value,

b. are bad to the extent of being harmful or even evil.

c. In the OT,

Words that devalue the image of God in me or in others.

4. To profane is to speak words that pollute the holiness of God either in me or in others.

a. Why is this such a big deal?

b. Because Paul in Romans 8 is telling us that if we are believers, the HOLY SPIRIT lives in us.

c. Because the Spirit lives in us, we are adopted into the family of God.

d. If you have the Spirit, and I have the Spirit, then we are members together (Paul just said this in Ephesians 4).

e. When I cuss, curse, profane, and use foul language, I am polluting the and defaming the Spirit in me and in you.

#10. We must Be mindful of “HOLY” Spirit.

³⁰ And don’t grieve God’s Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. ³² And be kind and compassionate

³ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 913.

to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

A. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.

1. We grieve the Holy Spirit when we subject him to the unholy.
2. Because the Holy Spirit lives in us, according to Romans 8, He never steps out of the room to give you some privacy.
3. We always carry the Spirit with us, if we are a believer.
4. Are you taking the Holy Spirit to places He doesn't want to be?

B. Notice what else grieves the Holy Spirit:

³¹ Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice.

1. When you shout out at your kids, your spouse, or the person in traffic, are you not grieving the Spirit?
2. That bitterness you are hanging onto is grieving the Spirit.
3. That slander, those words you will say behind someone's back but will never tell to their face is grieving the Spirit.
4. Because the Holy Spirit is alive in us, He can be excited, or He can be grieved by what we do.

C. We must put to death the deeds of the flesh because the Spirit is sensitive and can be grieved by us.

Close. I put my flesh to death because Jesus loves me.

Romans 8:12-14 (CSB)

¹² So then, brothers and sisters, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh, ¹³ because if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons.

A. Love is the greatest motivator.

1. When a kid feels loved, they accomplish more.

2. When a spouse feels loved, they thrive.

B. When we realize that the death to self by the Spirit is actually a form of love, it changes everything.

1. Jesus is not asking of us anything that He didn't do.

2. Jesus took on human flesh.

3. Jesus was tempted in every way and was yet without sin.

4. Jesus submitted his flesh to the tortures of man.

5. Jesus literally crucified the flesh, becoming the curse upon the cross so we could live in freedom.

C. I crucify the flesh because God loves me.

1. And now he invites us to crucify our flesh and walk in the Spirit.

2. He doesn't ask us to do this in our own willpower but in the power of the Holy Spirit if you will allow Him to help.

Prayer: What needs to die today?