

13 Tactical Steps to Kill Sin in Your Life

It is both relief and heartache to know that all true believers have sin remaining in them in this life.

The great apostle said, "Not that I have already attained or have already been perfected, but I follow after it so that I may lay hold of that for which I was seized by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12). In another place, he said, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:23). And Jesus taught us to pray daily, "And forgive us our debts" (Matt. 6:12).

This does not mean we should become complacent about sin. It means we must fight it daily. We are commanded to constantly kill the sin that remains in our lives: "For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if through the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live (Rom. 8:13). "Therefore put to death the parts of your earthly nature: sexual immorality, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5).

This is not optional. This is mortal combat: Sin dies or we die. Not that we ever become perfect in this age, but we go on killing sins as they attack us from day to day. We do not settle in with sin. We fight and we kill.

How do we kill sin? Here are 13 tactical steps in the battle:

1. Take heart from the truth that the old sinful you is decisively already dead (Rom. 6:6; Col. 3:3; Gal. 5:24). By faith we are united to Christ so that His death was our death (Rom. 6:5; 2 Cor. 5:14). This means three things: (a) The mortal blow to our "old man" has been struck; (b) the old self will not succeed in domination now; and (c) his final

obliteration is certain.

2. Consciously reckon the old man dead; that is, believe the truth of Scripture about the old man's death in Christ and seek to live in that freedom (Rom. 6:11). Living out the reality that you are is the proof that you are. One clear illustration of becoming who you are is found in 1 Corinthians 5:7: "Therefore purge out the old yeast, that you may be a new batch, since you are unleavened. For even Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us." It sounds strange, but salvation is a strange and wonderful thing: Clean out the old leaven of sin, because it is really already cleaned out. If you try to play logic games with this reality and say, "I don't need to fight sin because it is already cleaned out," you will prove only that you are not among the number that is cleansed.

3. Cultivate enmity with sin! You don't kill friends (Rom. 8:13). You kill enemies. Ponder how sin killed your best Friend (Jesus), dishonors your Father and aims to destroy you forever. Develop more hatred for sin.

4. Rebel against sin's coup. Refuse to be bullied by its deceits and manipulations. "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts" (Rom. 6:12). Temptations to sin are all half-truths and half-lies at best. Paul calls their fruit "lusts of deceit" (Eph. 4:22).

5. Declare radical allegiance to the other side—God—and consciously put all your mind, heart and body at his disposal for righteousness and purity. "Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but yield yourselves to God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your bodies to God as instruments of righteousness" (Rom. 6:13).

6. Don't make any plans that open the door for sin's entry. "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts" (Rom. 13:14). Don't prove your

purity in a pornography shop or your commitment to simplicity at an upscale mall.

7. Know the spirit of the age and consciously resist conformity to it (Rom. 12:2). As D.L. Moody said, "The ship belongs in the water of the world, but if the water gets in the ship, it sinks."

8. Develop mental habits that continually renew the mind in God-centeredness (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:16). Fix attention daily on "the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5), "the things that are above" (Col. 3:2). Let your mind dwell on whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent and worthy of praise (Phil. 4:8).

9. Admit failure and confess all known sin every day (1 John 1:9). Ask God for forgiveness (Matt. 6:12).

10. Ask for the Spirit's help and power in all these things. "For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if through the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Rom. 8:13). All that is good in us is a "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22). He causes us to walk as we should (Ezek. 36:27; Is. 26:12).

11. Be part of a larger and a smaller fellowship where you are exhorted often to beware of the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13). Perseverance in faith is a community project. We have no warrant to think we will make it to heaven if we neglect the appointed means of mutual encouragement and warning.

12. Fight your sinful impulses with all your might as a boxer fights an opponent and as a marathon runner fights fatigue (1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Tim. 4:8).

13. Beware of "works of law" (Gal. 3:2, 5), **but let all your warfare be "the work of faith"** (2 Thess. 1:11). That is, let your fight against sin spring from your confidence in the superior pleasures of all God promises to be for you in

Christ. {eoa}

The article above is one of 120 daily devotions in John Piper's devotional book, A Godward Life: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All of Life.

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