

Articles and Sermons :: How do I mortify the flesh?

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(Thomas Watson, "The Christian Soldier" 1669)

The flesh is a bosom traitor; it is like the Trojan horse within the walls, which does all the mischief. The flesh is a sly enemy—it kills by embracing. The embraces of the flesh are like the ivy embracing the oak; which sucks out the strength of it for its own leaves and berries. So the flesh by its soft embraces, sucks out of the heart all good.

The pampering of the flesh, is the quenching of God's Spirit. The flesh chokes and stifles holy motions—the flesh sides with Satan. There is a party within us, which will not pray, which will not believe. The flesh inclines us more to believe a temptation than a promise. The flesh is so near to us, its counsels are more attractive. There is no chain of adamant which binds so tightly —as the chain of lust.

In the best of saints, do what they can, sin will fasten its roots in them, and spring out sometimes with inordinate desires. There is always something which needs mortifying. "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry." Colossians 3:5.

How do I mortify the flesh?

1. Withdraw the fuel that may make lust burn. Avoid all temptations. Take heed of that which nourishes sin. Those who pray that they may not be led into temptation —must not lead themselves into temptation.

2. Fight against fleshly lusts with spiritual weapons —faith and prayer. The best way to combat with sin is —upon our knees. Beg strength from Christ. Samson's strength lay in his hair; our strength lies in our head—Christ. This is a mystery to the major part of the world—who gratify the flesh rather than mortify it.