

Articles and Sermons :: The Mortification of Things That Edify Not

The Mortification of Things That Edify Not - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2012/2/8 23:01

The Apostle Paul was inspired to mention four times in the New Testament that all things are lawful to the believer in Christ (see 1 Corinthians 6:12a&b and 1 Corinthians 10:23a&b), because the Holy Spirit knew legalism would be such a deadly snare for so many. However, there is a disclaimer that goes along with this truth: All things may be lawful to the believer, but all things do not edify the spirit. All things may indeed be lawful, but the follower of Christ must not allow himself to be brought under the power of any of them.

According to scripture, the man or woman who is led by the Holy Spirit is the true child of God (Romans 8:14). God fills His children with the Holy Spirit so that they can walk in Him and mortify all things that edify not the spirit. As we walk with the Lord in the beauty of holiness, careful to keep our consciences clean and thoughts pure, our inward man is afforded light, divine strength and wisdom. The Spirit of Christ fellowships with our spirits in a holy abode, and as we continually abide in Him we are informed as to what is edifying for our spirits and what is not.

It is not so much the physical acts that are subject to holy mortification as it is the impulses of the mind. When we are young and immature in Christ, the Holy Spirit deals more with our brute actions than with our thoughts: He deals primarily with our speech, our manifested doings in the flesh— in short, the physical results of yielding to temptation. But as we mature, the focus gradually shifts to our hidden thoughts and to our unseen motives. He zeros in on hypocrisy, white-washed religiosity, selfishness, greed, spiritual pride, unspoken malice. Before we commit a deed, while it is yet in the embryonic stage of our mind's evaluation, God scans the motive and then prescribes for it either liberty or mortification. Responding to His judgment with an "amen" constitutes a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to Him. The deed in question may be a perfectly legal one, but not expedient to our growth in grace or to the edifying of our spiritual nurturing, which is the reason God compels us to mortify. Other believers may be permitted to do that which God forbids you to partake of, but this is because He deals with us as individuals, according to the light we have, and not as a collective group.

A man with a floodlight can see a much greater area in circumference than a man with a candle. Spiritually speaking, the former will have much more to mortify in depth and detail than the latter. The greater the maturity in Christ, the more meticulously God impresses His mortifying scalpel to the soul of all that which edifies not. With the depth of the light, also comes the corresponding empowerment for us to comply with His impressions of mortification. We find we are able to obey; we are able to put the thing to death and continue on with Him in unbroken fellowship. This power is given to us through the in-filling of the Holy Spirit. The man or woman who is filled with the Spirit of God can instantly know what is edifying and what is not; that is, what is expedient and edifying for their inner man and what is not. It is God Himself who instructs them, woos them, exhorts them and then empowers them to mortify.

We know from the letter of God's Word those things which are universally forbidden for every believer. Namely, the outward manifestations of sin: fornication, lying, adultery, theft, sorcery, etc. We need to understand that these goliath infractions are but the result of a negligence in mortification at the inner level of inception; they are the outer volcanic eruption of molten strongholds, of deep and dormant unmortified lusts.

Scripture shows us that the end result of seed sown to the flesh is a corrupt crop (Galatians 6:7). As our walks flourish in Christ, we are given more wisdom as to the dealing of the seed before it hits the dirt of our flesh to germinate into corruption. Advanced mortification begins at ground-level: at the nucleus of differentiation between that which edifies and that which does not. God's Spirit leads us to put to death the non-edifying impulse at the point of entry, before it can vivify the flesh and sink its talons into the soulful logic of our Adamic nature.

We may use soulish things for our intellectual stimulation and enjoyment, but when it comes to the feeding of the spirit, we must be able to tell the difference between that which merely refreshes the soulish outer man to that which revitalizes the spiritual inner man. Just as you would not pump diesel into a gasoline engine, the fuel for the soul is wholly incompatible for the edification of the spirit. Conversely, spiritual sustenance is often bland (if not foolish) to the soul's taste if the spirit is yet dead in trespasses and sin.

There is a host of material and pursuits we indulge in which edifies the soul but does nothing for the spirit. If we are attempting to feed our spirits with soul food - and pass such nutrients off as inner-man edification - we have deceived ourselves. There is much Christian wrangling, debating, theorizing and speculating that masquerades as spirit-food for edification.

on, but which is, in reality, non-edifying vanity that should be mortified. Such activity may be legal to the believers, but legality does not always presuppose expediency. The way to differentiate between the two is by submitting yourself to the mortifying influence of God's Spirit in the "little things" of your walk.

Little by little, you will begin to see the difference between that which truly edifies, and that which does not. By putting the right fuel in the right engine, we will make strides as far as redeeming the time and maximizing the productivity of our meditations.

May the Lord God bring us into the deeper light of this area.

- Brother Paul

<http://understandingmortification.wordpress.com/>

Re: The Mortification of Things That Edify Not - posted by RobertW (), on: 2012/2/9 4:31

Good article dear brother.

Re: The Mortification of Things That Edify Not - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/2/9 5:36

Good article, Paul.

I did write a longer response but deleted it because I believed it could distract...

God bless.

Re: - posted by mama27, on: 2012/2/9 8:45

I SO appreciate this series - THANK YOU!

Re: The Mortification of Things That Edify Not - posted by lylewise, on: 2012/2/9 10:00

What graceful reckoning we are given that we may not founder. Thanks brother Paul.

Re: The Mortification of Things That Edify Not - posted by Elibeth, on: 2012/2/9 10:03

Bro. Paul,

I to, am so blessed with these very indept teachings.

I believe ,these enlightening,... writtings are His, and are passing through you.
He has blessed you,...and it is blessing us also.

May we all accomplish His Great purpose.

Blessings,
Elizabeth

Re: The Mortification of Things That Edify Not - posted by hoohouu (), on: 2012/2/9 11:39

This was great.

"But as we mature, the focus gradually shifts to our hidden thoughts and to our unseen motives. He zeros in on hypocrisy, white-washed religiosity, selfishness, greed, spiritual pride, unspoken malice."

I think these are sometimes our "blind-spots". They will definitely manifest in outward sins, but they are first sins of the heart. Until the Holy Spirit convicts us of these sins we are often times unaware.

The beautiful thing about conviction is that God gives you a desire to fix those things as He reveals them. I was always under the impression that conviction was this overwhelming guilt that eventually caused me to give in. I think now that it's God seeing our heart to please Him and our longing to know Him and be near to Him that He cleanses our heart. I can honestly say about any sins in my life that I have been able to conquer that it was not me but Christ living in me.

I'm powerless to live worthy of the call of God. He is my power, my strength, and my refuge.

I think most of us on SI have hearts that long to know God and please Him. In turn we want others to know Him and please Him as well because we know the joy it brings.

I've come to have what might be a different interpretation of a popular refrigerator verse, "Delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart".

Since most here have a heart that desires to please God I believe that, first, God placed that desire there and second, He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it.

This was a very timely and well put post.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2012/2/9 19:52

Thank you for all the encouragement dear saints. There are just a few more articles left in this series before they prayerfully go into print. I am sensing that this study in mortification is coming to an end. I've shared with you everything I know, according to the light which the Lord has graciously shed upon my spirit. May these writings stir you unto a deeper fellowship with God. May they inspire you to go on unto perfection with resolute victory over all things unchristlike. May Christ be magnified; His Body edified; Satan, the world and the flesh mortified.

You can check out the blog for a comprehensive list of all the articles I've written on mortification:

<http://understandingmortification.wordpress.com/>

Brother Paul