

# Killing the Amalekites



Aaron & Hur Holding Moses' Hands

The LORD has sworn;  
The LORD will have war against Amalek  
from generation to generation.  
--Exodus 17:16

**AMALEK IS A PICTURE  
OF OUR FALLEN FLESH**

Exodus 17:16+ and he said, "The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."

## Related Resource:

- See verse by verse comments on Exodus 17

Although one must use considerable caution in interpreting [Types](#) (See related discussion - Typology ; see also Approach to Interpretation of God's Word for caveats) in the Old Testament, there is a consensus among most conservative expositors that the [Amalekites](#) are reasonably representative of all evil forces opposed to God's people throughout all the ages. And in the light of NT teaching, those enemies are most "conveniently" grouped into **3 categories**: (1) the [world](#), (2) the [flesh](#) and (3) the [devil](#), the **flesh** being the foremost adversary in many ways as it is the one that is constantly "inside the castle" or inside the fortifications of our mortal bodies, so to speak!

Paul alludes to the value of careful study of the Old Testament **examples** ("types") writing...

(1 Cor 10:6+) Now these things (1 Cor 10:1-5) happened as **examples** ([tupos/typos](#) gives us our English "**type**") for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.

(1 Cor 10:11+) Now these things (1 Cor 10:7-10) happened to them as an **example** ([tupos/typos](#)), and they were written for our **instruction** ([nouthesia](#)), upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

**Instruction** ([3559](#)) ([nouthesia](#) from [noutheteo](#) = literally "put in mind" from [nous](#) = mind + [tithemi](#) = to place or put -- it describes exertion of influence upon nous implying resistance) is any word of encouragement or reproof which leads to correct behavior. It conveys the idea of giving one counsel about avoiding or ceasing an improper course of conduct. **Nouthesia** can mean advise given concerning dangerous consequences of a happening or action. **TDNT** adds that the root verb [noutheteo](#) "means "to impart understanding," "to set right," "to lay on the heart." **The stress is on influencing not merely the intellect but the will and disposition.**"

(Ro 15:4+) For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our **instruction** ([didaskalia](#) = doctrine), so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Amplified Version - For whatever was thus written in former days was written for our instruction, that by [our steadfast and patient] endurance and the encouragement [drawn] from the Scriptures we might hold fast to and cherish hope.

**C H Spurgeon** writes (regarding Exodus 17:9+) "Now, beloved, this scene of warfare is not recorded in Scripture as in interesting circumstance to amuse the lover of history, but it is written for our edification; for we remember the text which says—"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our profit." (Romans 15:4KJV) There is some profit to be derived from this—and we believe a peculiar profit, too, since God was pleased to make this the first writing commanded by Divine authority as a record for generations to come. We think that the journeys of the children of Israel furnish us with many emblems of the journey of God's church through the world; and we believe, that this fight with Amalek is a metaphor and an [emblem](#) of that **constant and daily** fight which all God's people **must carry on with sins without and sins within.**" (Exodus 17:9 - [The War of Truth](#))

So not only will the LORD have war ([Lxx](#) = [polemeo](#) in [present tense](#) = continually) against Amalek from generation to generation (Ex 17:16+), but so will the LORD's children, for as Paul explains "the [flesh](#) (continually) sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in (continual) opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." (Gal 5:17+)

**Rod Mattoon** adds that "This conflict between **Israel and Amalek** is a **picture of the inward battle that Christians face every day**. It is the battle between our flesh and the Spirit of God. Amalek means "a people that exhausts or consumes." The Amalekites are a picture of the sinful desires of our flesh that consume, destroy, and exhaust us like a person trying to free themselves from the bondage of a rope."....Beloved, our flesh will always oppose us, but need not oppress us. It will ever conflict, but need not conquer. It will constantly harass and hassle, but need not hinder or harness us because of the power of the Holy Spirit Who indwells every believer. (AMEN!) Through the Holy Spirit we can get victory over our flesh." (Treasures in Exodus)

**Warren Wiersbe** - It is important that God's people cooperate with God in gaining victory over the flesh. Romans 6 tells us to reckon and to yield, and by faith to put to death the deeds of the body. Moses alone on the mount could not win the battle, nor could Joshua alone on the battlefield: victory required both of them. How wonderful that we have the interceding Son of God who is for us (Ro 8:34+), and the indwelling Spirit of God Who is for us (Ro 8:26+), plus the inspired Word of God in our hearts! Note that Joshua did not completely destroy the Amalekites; he "[discomfited](#)" them (Ex 17:13+). **The flesh will never be destroyed or "eradicated" in this life; Christ will give us new bodies when He returns** (Phil. 3:21+). In 1 Sa 15 we will see that Saul's sin was in refusing to deal completely with the Amalekites; and 2 Sa 1:6–10 informs us that it was one of the Amalekites Saul spared that killed him! (ED: MESSAGE? DON'T RATIONALIZE, COMPROMISE OR MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE "AMALEKITES", I.E., YOUR **FLESH**!) "Make no provision for the flesh" (Ro 13:14NKJV+). (Borrow [Wiersbe's expository outlines on the Old Testament](#) b)

**William MacDonald** - Amalek, a descendant of Esau, is **atype of the flesh**—that is, the evil, corrupt, Adamic nature of man. Observe the following parallels between the flesh and Amalek: (1) It presents itself after the Holy Spirit is given at conversion to fight against the Spirit; (2) The LORD will have war with the flesh from generation to generation; (3) It is never eradicated from the believer till death or the Rapture of the church. (4) Two means of triumph over the flesh are suggested—prayer and the Word. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Jon Courson** - Amalekite means "dweller in the valley." Each time the Amalekites are seen in Scripture, they're an illustration of the flesh, warring against the people of God. That is why God said to Moses, "You shall war against Amalek from generation to generation" (Exodus 17:16+). Whether it's due to the fleshly tendencies within us or to external enemies **ED: the [world](#), and the [devil](#)** that seek to pull us down, you can count on a fight from Amalek. **Right when you think you have things all figured out, another generation of Amalekites will rise up and war against you. Knowing this, aren't you thankful that He who is within you is greater than any Amalekite who comes against you?** (1 John 4:4+).

**Dr John MacArthur** writes that "The **Amalekites** are a perfect illustration of the **sin** that remains in the believer's life." (for [full discussion see below](#)).

And so as we study Exodus 17 which records literal warfare between Israel and the Amalekites, let us keep in mind that Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 10

Now these things (see 1Co 10:1-10) happened as **examples** ([tupos](#) = "of the types given by God as an indication of the future, in the form of persons or things" = BDAG) for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved...(11) Now these things happened to them (Israel) as an **example** (typikos = typologically, typically, as an example or warning) and they were written for our **instruction** ([nouthesia](#) = teaching, admonition, warning, ethical and corrective instruction in regard to belief or behavior) upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1Cor 10:6,11)

Paul adds that if any one of us thinks he or she can stand in our own strength against the "Amalekites" then we need to

**Take heed** (present imperative = command to continually beware, calls for dependence on [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) lest (we) fall. (1Cor 10:12)

**Adrian Rogers** uses the truths about **Amalek** as an illustration of the spiritual attack believers undergo from the [flesh](#), the [devil](#) and the [world](#):

**(1) He Attacks Unexpectedly** - First of all, he attacks unexpectedly. You wouldn't expect him at this particular juncture, any more than I expected him this morning. You see, when did he attack? After they'd come through the Red Sea, after they had eaten manna. God fed them with manna from Heaven. Supernaturally, that manna pictured, also, the Lord Jesus Christ. After they had drunk water from the Rock, you'd think they'd be sailing along right now. I'm going to tell you something, friend: Amalek attacks unexpectedly. And, many times, your biggest battles will come after your biggest blessings. You just study it in the Bible. Elijah, when he had that revival on Mount Carmel... Remember when he called down fire from Heaven, and he said, "The God that answered by fire, let Him be God." and the fire fell, and all of that? (1 Kings 18:24). And then, the first thing you know, that Elijah, who stood against 450 prophets on Carmel—he's running from one woman, Jezebel. And, he gets down under a juniper tree and requests for himself that he might die—I mean, right after a great spiritual battle. You find the same thing about Moses after he had come through the Red Sea—requesting that he might die. Jonah—after Jonah had been through a revival in Nineveh—requests for himself that he might die. There's a principle that I would almost call "the devil after the dove." When Jesus Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit, like a dove, descended upon Him—that's depicted in our baptism there, that dove coming down—then, in the next chapter, the Bible says He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil—the devil after the dove (Matthew 4:1, cf Lk 4:1+). And, here are these people—they've just had an incredible spiritual experience; they've just drunk water from that Rock. But, the Bible says that the flesh lusts against the Spirit (Galatians 5:17+). And, if that water represents the Holy Spirit, then Amalek represents the flesh. It was Leonard Ravenhill who said, "When God opens the windows of Heaven to bless us, the devil will open the doors of Hell to blast us." And so it happened at a place called Rephidim—Rephidim—which literally means, "a place of rest, a place of support." I mean, here they are; everything looks good. So, what should that tell me? It should tell me always to be alert. Jesus warned us, the apostles warned us, to be alert—"Be sober, be vigilant" (1 Peter 5:8+). Jesus said, "Watch... and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Mark 14:38).

**(2) He Attacks Indirectly** - But, not only does he attack us unexpectedly; but, I'll tell you, he attacks indirectly. Now, you're in Exodus. Just turn to Deuteronomy here, for just a moment. Look, if you will, in Deuteronomy 25....Moses is recounting this story that we find in Exodus 17. You see, God won't let Amalek off the hook:

Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, 18 how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. 19 "Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget. (Deuteronomy 25:17-19).

Talk about holding a grudge! Man! Listen. God says, "Don't forget this guy Amalek." God has something about Amalek. And, notice here what he says about Amalek. You see, not only did he attack unexpectedly, but he attacked indirectly. What it was, was a sneak attack from behind. "He smote the hindmost of thee"—that is, those that were weak, and those that were feeble, and those... He didn't attack the strong.

Now, the devil will not attack you at your strongest point; he'll attack you at your weakest point. That's where you're going to go down in the flesh. The only problem is that your weakest point may be what you think is your strongest point.

Oswald Chambers said, "An unguarded strength is a double weakness." But, the devil knows where that weakness is, and the flesh goes to that weakness; and so... Have you ever said... Have you ever done anything and said, "I'm surprised at myself; I'm really surprised"? Have you ever asked yourself, "What made me do that?" Have you ever done that? Of course. "I am surprised at myself." I'll tell you one thing: God wasn't surprised; Jesus is not surprised. "He knew man and needed not that any should testify what was in man" (John 2:25). There is, in you and in me, something down there—given the right thing in an unguarded moment, it'll come to the surface. And, you'll say and do things, and say, "Oh, I'm surprised." Have you ever done that? Sure, I was surprised at myself, this morning. What made me do that? Well, you see, what happens is that Amalek—he attacks unexpectedly, when you think everything's going fine. He attacks indirectly.

**God tests us at our strongest place;  
the flesh tempts us at our weakest place.**

Here were these wounded, and weak, and weary, on the one hand; and yet, after a great spiritual experience, on the other hand, sitting ducks.

**C. He Attacks Arrogantly** - And, not only that, but he attacks us arrogantly. Notice again—look at Deuteronomy 25:18: "He feared not God" (Deuteronomy 25:18). The Bible says, "The flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be" (Romans 8:7+). The flesh has no desire for God, and God has no pity on the flesh. (Consider taking 36' to listen to Adrian Rogers' full sermon entitled [Victory Over the Flesh](#))

## THE FLESH

**1) The "FLESH"** (sarx ) is the **"Sin principle"** that every human born has "inherited" from Adam (Ro 5:12+). In medical terms every human born has inherited the deadly "Sin virus" from Adam and we pass on this "Sin virus" to all our offspring. In other words, **"Sin"** (singular and in the original Greek text in Romans 6-8 is usually modified with the definite article "the" = **the Sin**) is personified as a harsh King or Slave master that exercises the rule over our hearts, tempting us to obey its lusts (strong desires) to commit sins of thought, word and deed (Ro 6:1-3+). That describes the dreadful condition of every unbeliever - slaves to **Sin**. And so they commit personal **sins** (plural) in obedience to the commands **Sin** which relentlessly attacks our thoughts again and again (like the Amalekites did the nation of Israel), continually tempting us to commit sins.

Once a person believes in Jesus Christ, his or her relation to the old harsh King **Sin** changes. This spiritual "emancipation" by Christ is summarized by Paul in Romans 6, a chapter that calls for our repeated re-reading and studying. Paul writes "that our old self (our old sinful selves) was **crucified with Him** (Christ), in order that our body of sin might be done away with (rendered inoperative, but still present in our body), so that we would no longer be slaves to sin for he who has died is freed from sin." (Ro 6:6, 7+) So believers are liberated from the dominion of King **Sin** and the **Flesh** or **"Sin principle"** has been rendered inoperative when we were crucified with Christ.

Believers are now under grace and are indwelt by and empowered by the Spirit and thus possess the supernatural ability to say **"No"** to the "lusts (epithumia) of the flesh". Now here is where the trouble comes! The power of Sin, the power of the Flesh, has been rendered inoperative, but the presence of Sin (and the Flesh) has not been eradicated. Therefore Sin or the **Flesh** remains in in latent (so to speak) from in our body, continually "lurking," continually looking for an opportunity to launch an "Amalekite-like" attack on our heart and mind. And yet now believers have the power to fight the flesh, but this fight is a "joint effort." We must make a conscious choice to fight the strong desires/temptations that come at us from the Sin/Flesh, but we can ONLY do this successfully by continual dependence on the Holy Spirit. Paul says it this way in Romans 8:13 "by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Did you observe our part? "You are putting to death the deeds." And what was God's part? "By the Spirit." We are in 100% responsible to kill the sinful deeds which Sin/Flesh tempts us to commit, but we are 100% dependent on the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to successfully kill the sinful deeds. Does that make sense? For more explanation of this vital principle which I fear many believers have never been taught or do not fully understand see ["Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible" \(100/100\)](#).

If this is new information, I would suggest going back through the Romans passages, even reading them in different versions and asking the Spirit to lead you into all truth, remembering that the first article in the Christian's spiritual armor is described in Ephesians 6:14, Paul commanding us to **"Stand firm"** ([aorist imperative](#) a command calling for us to rely on [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) therefore, **HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH.**" So it is critically important for you to have firm grasp of this incredible truth of what happened to you the moment you believed in Christ and were at that time "vicariously" crucified with Him.

The practical import of this truth is that believers have been now delivered from the power of **Sin**

Even so **consider** ([logizomai](#) in [present imperative](#) - Daily "add up" the truths in Ro 6:1-10 which tell us what happened when we were crucified with Christ. Continually obey - only possible as we are supernaturally enabled by the Spirit) yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Ro 6:11+)

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Ro 6:12-14+).

In Romans 8 Paul gives what [Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones](#) referred to as the most important passage in the Bible in regard to our daily growth in Christ-likeness...

for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if BY THE SPIRIT (GOD'S PART = HIS ENABLING POWER) you (YOUR PART = DAILY CHOICE - GOD WON'T FORCE YOU! SEE [100/100](#)) are PUTTING TO DEATH (present tense, [active voice](#) = VOLITIONAL CHOICE, CHOICE OF YOUR WILL - SEE Php 2:13NLT

BELOW) the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God (HOW? BY PUTTING TO DEATH THE DEEDS OF THE BODY BY HIS POWER), these are sons of God. (Romans 8:13-14+)

**Comment** - [Listen to Dr Lloyd-Jones' sermons](#) on Romans 8:13 found on this page (there is also one on the previous page - see link to go to previous page at the bottom) (Dr Lloyd-Jones also has [68 sermons on the Armor of God!](#))

**Paul** emphasizes this **on going** daily war with our "Amalekite-like" flesh in Galatians 5:17 (notes) teaching us that the

**Flesh** sets (present tense = continuously) its desire ([epithumeo](#) - strong desire) against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are (present tense = continuously) in opposition ([antikeimai](#) - literally lined up face to face against!) to one another (Why? What is the result?) **so that** you may not do the things that you please (or that you "continuously desire" = present tense). (Ga 5:17+)

The key verses in all the Bible for daily victory in this continual battle with our "Amalekite" flesh are the following passages (**Beloved I would strong [memorizing](#) the passage above and those below so that you might be enabled by the Spirit to [meditate](#) on them frequently/daily!**)

But I say, **walk** ([present imperative](#) - Continually obey - only possible as we are filled) by the Spirit, and you will not (ABSOLUTE NEGATION) carry out the desire of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16-See commentary)

And to continually obey Paul's command we need to be continually empowered/enabled by the Spirit (yes, it is a bit mysterious that we cannot walk by the Spirit unless we are filled with the Spirit)

And **do not get drunk** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled** ([present imperative](#) - Continually yield that you may be controlled) with the Spirit, (Eph 5:18+):

- [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#) (or "How to Keep All 1642 Commandments in the New Testament!")
- [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#) - Chart Comparing Ephesians 5:18ff and Col 3:16+ "Let the word of Christ richly dwell ([present imperative](#) - Continually) within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

The preceding passages about being daily filled and daily walking in the power of the Spirit are vital elements in your [progressive sanctification](#) as the Spirit continually transforms you from the inside out!

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (DAILY BEHOLDING THE WORD IS THE BEST WAY TO SEE HIS GLORY), are being transformed ([metamorphoo](#) - LIKE A SPIRITUAL CATERPILLAR TO A BEAUTIFUL CHRIST-LIKE "BUTTERFLY" - present tense = IT IS A PROCESS, [passive voice](#) = WE MUST YIELD TO HIM) into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Cor 3:18+)

You may be saying, that all sounds great, but I don't have the desire to work out my salvation. Paul has the antidote for apathy...

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out** ([present imperative](#) - A COMMAND TO DAILY PURSUE [progressive sanctification](#)) your salvation with fear and trembling; (Phil 2:12+)

**FOR** (TERM OF EXPLANATION - EXPLAINS HOW TO WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION) God is working (present tense = CONTINUALLY) in you (THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN YOUR), (CONTINUALLY) giving you the DESIRE (I CALL IT THE "WANT TO" BECAUSE MY OLD FLESH DOES NOT "WANT TO!") and the POWER to do what pleases Him (PLEASING OUR FATHER - OUR ULTIMATE GOAL EACH DAY!). (Phil 2:13NLT+)

Peter reminds us why we must be continually on guard, continually vigilant, continually filled with the Holy Spirit

**Aliens** ([parepidemois](#)) and **strangers** ([parepidemos](#)) on earth we must continually (present tense) "**abstain** ([apechomai](#) - hold ourselves away from these lusts = put some separation between us and lusts which calls for continual reliance on [the Holy Spirit to carry this out](#)) from fleshly lusts ([epithumia](#)), which (continually = present tense) wage war ([strateuomai](#) English "strategy" = trick in war for deceiving and outwitting the enemy! - [memorize](#) so you can [meditate on this verse](#) with these added insights) against the soul. (1 Peter 2:11+)



One should be able to see the parallel between these NT truths and Exodus 17:16 which teaches that "the LORD (Jehovah) will have war against Amalek from **generation to generation**." And beloved, if the *Amalekites* war against God, they will also continuously carry out war against His children who are in covenant with Him (Jn 1:12+).

Ultimately when you are **filled with** and **walking by the Spirit**, you are **walking the same way Jesus walked** when He walked on earth, giving us the perfect example of how to live this Christian life. That is why Paul commanded the all to often "fleshly" believers in the church at Corinth to "**Be** ([present imperative](#) - Continually) imitators of me, (HERE IS THE KEY PHRASE) **just as I also am of Christ**." (1 Corinthians 11:1+) Paul had learned to walk like Jesus walked! John gave a similar exhortation that "the one who says he abides (present tense) in Him ([IN CHRIST](#)) ought himself to walk (present tense) **in the same manner as He (JESUS) walked**." (1 John 2:6+) Peter summed up Jesus' entire 3 year ministry in a way that makes it clear Jesus **continually depended on and was enabled by the Spirit** explaining that "you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. (SPIRIT COMING ON HIM INAUGURATED HIS MINISTRY - Lk 3:22+) You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power (cf EVENT IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS BAPTISM = Lk 4:1+, Lk 4:14+, Lk 4:18+, etc), and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. (Acts 10:37-38+)

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)

## MORTIFICATION OF SIN

**Dr John MacArthur** writes that "The **Amalekites** are a perfect illustration of the sin that remains in the believer's life. That sin—already utterly defeated at the cross—must be dealt with ruthlessly and hacked to pieces, or it will revive and continue to plunder and pillage his heart and sap his spiritual strength. He cannot be merciful with his Agag, or indwelling sin will turn and try to devour him. In fact, the sin remaining in Christians often becomes more fiercely determined after the gospel initially overthrows it. Scripture commands believers to deal with their sin by putting it to death: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." (Col 3:5–6KJV). They cannot obey partially or half-heartedly as they seek to eliminate sin from their lives. They cannot stop while the task remains incomplete. Sins, like Amalekites, have a way of escaping the slaughter, breeding, reviving, regrouping, and launching new and unexpected assaults on their victims' most vulnerable areas. **Strike Sin at Its Head.** **John Owen** wrote, "*He that is appointed to kill an enemy, if he leave striking before the other ceases living, doth but half his work.*" Christians must be always at the task of mortifying sin. They may slaughter a whole tribe of Amalekites, but if they deliberately permit one Agag to escape, God will not be pleased with their efforts. The **flesh** is very subtle and deceptive. A particular sin may leave the believer alone for awhile to make him think he is rid of it. But it can come back with a hellish fury if he is not on guard. Sin perpetually stalks him; he must be continually mortifying it. This is a duty he cannot rest from until he rests in glory. Give sin an inch, it will take a mile. If it can gain a footing in Christians' lives, it will send forth roots and grow like [kudzu](#). It will use them and abuse them and inflict as much disaster as possible. **Owen** wrote,

*"Every unclean thought or glance would be adultery if it could; every covetous desire would be oppression, every thought of unbelief would be atheism, might it grow to its head....It proceeds toward its height by degrees, making good the ground it hath got by hardness.... Now nothing can prevent this but mortification; that withers the root and strikes at the head of sin every hour, so that whatever it aims at it is crossed in. There is not the best saint in the world but, if he should give over this duty, would fall into as many cursed sins as ever did any of his kind." Later, he added, "Sin sets itself against every act of holiness, and against every degree we grow to. Let not that man think he makes any progress in holiness while he walks not over the bellies of his lusts."*

Christians are not ignorant of Satan's devices, the apostle declares (2 Cor 2:11+)(ED: SEE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL). Neither should they be naive about the subtleties of their own flesh. When Agag comes to them cheerfully, saying, "*Surely the bitterness of death is past*" (1 Sam 15:32+) or when he wants to make friends and declare an end to hostilities—that is when it is most imperative to turn on him and cut him ruthlessly to pieces before the Lord.

**(1) Sin is not mortified when it is merely covered up** A Christian can hide his sin from the sight of others, but that is not the same as mortification. If a sin has simply been papered over with hypocrisy, what good is there in that? If conscience has only been daubed, Christians are in a much more dangerous state than before. "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find

compassion" (Prov 28:13+). You have not done your duty with regard to your sin until you have confessed and forsaken it.

**(2) Sin is not mortified when it is only internalized** If you forsake the outward practice of some evil, yet continue to ruminate on the memory of that sin's pleasures, beware. You may have moved your sin into the privacy of your imagination, where it is known only to you and to God, but that sin has not been mortified. If anything, it has become more deadly by being married to pretended righteousness. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for this very thing. They avoided murder, but tolerated hate. They refrained from fornication, but indulged in lustful thoughts. Jesus declared them worthy of eternal hell (Matt 5:21–28+).

**(3) Sin is not mortified when it is exchanged for another sin** What good is it to trade the lust of the flesh for the lust of the eyes? That lust has not been mortified; it has only changed form. Puritan Thomas Fuller said, "Some think themselves improved in piety, because they have left prodigality and reel into covetousness." If you succumb to this tactic, your heart is in danger of being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:13+).

**(4) Sin is not mortified until the conscience has been appeased** The goal is "love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1Ti 1:5+). As long as the conscience remains defiled, it affects a Christian's testimony.

Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and **keep a good conscience** so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame" (1 Pet 3:15–16+, emphasis added). Part of the process of mortification is to work through the issue of guilt. Those who attempt to evade guilt for sin have not properly confessed their sin; therefore they cannot be cleansed and fully forgiven.

**If you want to mortify sin**, John Owen wrote, "*Load thy conscience with the guilt of it.*" Contrary to the popular wisdom today, he believed the pangs of guilt were a natural and healthy consequence of wrongdoing. "*Be ashamed,*" he wrote, for he saw shame as an advantage in the mortification of sin. He correctly understood Paul's meaning in 2 Cor 7:10+: "The sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret." Those who give a nod of the head to their guilt, claim the promise of forgiveness, quickly reassure themselves, and then think no more of their wrongdoing are subjecting themselves to the heart-hardening deceit of sin—especially when the sin threatens to become a habit. Let sorrow do its full work in your heart to produce a deep, honest repentance, and those sins will be severely weakened.

**(5) Sin is not mortified when it is merely repressed.** Some people use diversions to avoid dealing with their sin. They try to drown their conscience with alcohol or drown out their guilt with entertainment and other distractions. When temptation surfaces, they do not give a biblical answer, as Jesus did (Matt 4:4, 7, 10+). Instead they seek a fleshly escape route. Of this tendency Martyn Lloyd-Jones said,

*"If you merely repress a temptation or this first motion of sin within you, it will probably come up again still more strongly. To that extent I agree with the modern psychology. Repression is always bad. 'Well, what do you do?' asks someone. I answer: When you feel that first motion of sin, just pull yourself up and say, 'Of course I am not having any dealings with this at all.' Expose the thing and say, 'This is evil, this is vileness, this is the thing that drove the first man out of Paradise.' Pull it out, look at it, denounce it, hate it for what it is; then you have really dealt with it. You must not merely push it back in a spirit of fear, and in a timorous manner. Bring it out, expose it, and analyse it; and then denounce it for what it is until you hate it."*

That is sound advice. **Christians should deal with their sin courageously, striking at its head. Subduing it a little bit is not enough. They need to exterminate it, hack it in pieces—seek by the means of grace and the power of the Spirit to wring the deadly life from it.**

It is a lifelong task, in which progress will always be only gradual. That may make the fight seem daunting at first. But as soon as Christians set themselves to the work, they discover that sin shall not be master over them, for they are under grace (Rom 6:14+). That means it is God who is at work in them both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Phil 2:13NLT+). And having begun His good work in them, He "will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6+). (From [Mortification of Sin](#) Master's Seminary Journal, 1994 - THE FULL ARTICLE IS 20 PAGES)

# "Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers"

## An Outline, Exposition and Summary

### Greg Herrick

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  - [3. Even the "Best of Us" Are Called to Mortify Sin](#)
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## THE WORLD

2) The **WORLD** represents sum total of the thoughts, ideas and actions that are opposed to God, which continually suppress His truth in unrighteousness and which influence and drive all men and women still "dead in their trespasses and sins" (Ep 2:1, 2-note, Ep 2:3 -note).

**World (kosmos - word study ; aion - word study)** in the context of spiritual warfare does not refer to the literal physical creation but to the world's system of values and way of doing things -- these anti-god influences seek to coerce believers to conform to the world corrupt view (Ro 12:2-note). The unregenerate person (non-believer) is either consciously or unconsciously controlled by the values and attitudes of this anti-god world view and behaves accordingly - in rebellion to God. The leader of this **world** is [Satan](#) as John teaches in his first epistle writing that the "whole world lies in the power of the evil one." (1Jn 5:19).

**John Piper** describes our war with the fallen Satanically controlled godless world system

We must cultivate the mindset of exiles. What this does mainly is sober us up and wake us up so that we don't drift with the world and take for granted that the way the world thinks and acts is the best way. We don't assume that what is on TV is helpful to the soul; we don't assume that the priorities of advertisers is helpful to the soul; we don't assume that the strategies and values of business and industry are helpful to the soul. We don't assume that any of this glorifies God. We stop and we think and we consult the Wisdom of our own country, heaven, and we don't assume that the conventional wisdom of this age is God's wisdom. We get our bearings from God in his word. When you see yourself as an alien and an exile with your citizenship in heaven, and God as your only Sovereign, you stop drifting with the current of the day. You ponder what is good for the soul and what honors God in everything: food, cars, videos, bathing suits, birth control, driving speeds, bed times, financial savings, education for the children, unreached peoples, famine, refugee camps, sports, death, and everything else. Aliens get their cue from God and not the world." (Read the full sermon [The War Against the Soul and the Glory of God](#))

## THE DEVIL

3) The third "**Amalekite**" who continuously wages war against God and His children from generation to generation is

the great dragon...the serpent of old who is called the devil (diabolos) and Satan, who (continuously) deceives (planao) the whole world" (Re 12:9+).

As believers it is vital to understand that we have been

delivered (rhuomai) from the domain (exousia = right and might y) of darkness and transferred...to the



kingdom of His beloved Son (Col 1:13+)

In Acts 26:18 Jesus instructed Paul to take the Gospel to the Gentiles...

to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' (Acts 26:18+)

**Charles H. Spurgeon** on "**THE GREAT WARFARE** which we think is typified by the contest between the children of Israel and Amalek" - First of all, note that this crusade, this sacred, holy war of which I speak, is not with men, but with Satan and with error. We wrestle not with flesh and blood." Christian men are not at war with any man that walks the earth. We are at war with infidelity, but the persons of infidels we love and pray for; we are at warfare with any heresy, but we have no enmity against heretics; we are opposed to, and cry war to the knife with everything that opposes God and his truth: but towards every man we would still endeavour to carry out the holy maxim, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." The Christian soldier hath no gun and no sword, for he fighteth not with men. It is with "spiritual wickedness in high places" that he fights, and with other principalities and powers than with those that sit on thrones and hold sceptres in their hands (Eph 6:12+). I have marked, however, that some Christian men—and it is a feeling to which all of us are prone—are very apt to make Christ's war a war of flesh and blood, instead of a war with wrong and spiritual wickedness (cf 2 Cor 10:3-5+). Have you never noticed in religious controversies how men will fall foul of each other, and make personal remarks and abuse each other? What is that but forgetting what Christ's war is? We are not fighting against men; we are fighting for men rather than against them. We are fighting for God and his truth against error and against sin; but not against men. **Woe, woe, to the Christian who forgets this sacred canon of warfare.** Touch not the persons of men, but smite their sin with a stout heart and with strong arm. Slay both the little ones and the great; let nothing be spared that is against God and his truth; but we have no war with the persons of poor mistaken men. Rome we hate even as we abhor hell, yet for her votaries we ever pray. Idolatry and infidelity we fiercely denounce, but the men who debase themselves by either of them are the objects not of wrath, but pity. We fight not against the men, but against the things which we consider in God's sight to be wrong. Let us always make that distinction, otherwise the conflict with Christ's church will be degraded into a mere battle of brute force and garments rolled in blood; and so the world will again be an [Aceldama](#)—a field of blood. It is this mistake which has nailed martyrs to the stake and cast confessors into prison, because their opponents could not distinguish between the imaginary error and the man. While they spoke stoutly against the seeming error; in their ignorant bigotry they felt that they must also persecute the man, which they need not and ought not to have done. I will never be afraid to speak out my mind with all the Saxon words I can get together, and I am not afraid of saying hard things against the devil and against what the devil teaches; but with every man in the wide world I am friends, nor is there one living with whom I am at enmity for a moment any more than with the babe that has just been brought into the world. **We must hate error, we must abhor falsehood; but we must not hate men, for God's warfare is against sin. May God help us always to make that distinction.**" (The War of Truth)

**John Butler** - Until Amalek is finally destroyed, God will war against them from generation to generation. This is a reminder that we are to war against evil from generation to generation. However, in our generation, many folk are quitting the war and saying we need to adapt to the culture (which is vile and corrupt). Many folk in our churches have forgotten we are to war against evil from generation to generation. (Analytical Bible Expositor:Exodus)

Thus Israel had to learn in warfare that even though they were to personally "fight the good fight of faith" (1Ti 6:12), victory (cp parallel passages regarding Divine victory - 2Sa 23:10, 11, 12; 1Chr 11:14; Ps 44:2-[note](#), Ps 144:10-[note](#), Pr 21:31, Ps 20:7-[note](#)) is found only in trust and obedience to Jehovah, in context specifically designated as Jehovah Nissi, the LORD our Banner, their rallying point. This is the same lesson all believers must learn (and re-learn), lest we become overwhelmed and dismayed by the "**Amalekites**" who attack unfairly, unexpectedly and unremittingly! Also keep in mind that every "physical battle" is but a picture and manifestation of the underlying eternal spiritual struggle between good and evil. Israel's physical enemy in this battle was the **Amalekites** who were descendants of Esau's grandson, **Amalek** (Ge 36:12). They were nomads in the desert south of Canaan (1Sa 15:7; 27:8) who because they **did not fear God** (Dt 25:18, cp Ge 20:11, Ps 36:1-[note](#); Ro 3:18-note) attacked God's people Israel. Their mode of attack was from the rear, assaulting the stragglers (Dt 25:17, 18, 19 Nu 24:20) who were "faint and weary" (ponder this point!).

I don't know what your experience is but when I am tired and weary that is often the very time that the "*Amalekites*" mount their "sniper" attacks. This is why Jesus warned His disciples, commanding them to

(present imperative = continuously) **keep watching** (click [discussion of gregoreuo](#)) and **praying** (present imperative = continuously) that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. (Mt 26:41+).

**Comment** - See discussion of our absolute need [for the Holy Spirit to obey these two NT commands](#) ("How to Keep All 1642 Commandments in the New Testament!")

In a similar way Peter also warned us to

**"Be of sober spirit** (aorist imperative = Do this now! It's urgent! Only possible by depending on the [Holy Spirit to obey](#)), **be on the alert** (aorist imperative = Do this now! It's urgent! Only possible by depending on the [Holy Spirit to obey](#)). Your adversary the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But **resist** (aorist imperative = Do this now! It's urgent! Only possible by depending on the [Holy Spirit to obey](#)) him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you." (1 Pe 5:8-10+ ).

In Deut 25:17, 18, 19, just before the second generation of Israelites from Egypt entered the promised land, Moses reminded them that when the LORD gave them rest from their enemies, they were to completely blot out the memory of **Amalek** and that this is a command and not optional! In a similar vein, believers likewise cannot strike a truce with any of the "*Amalekites*", Satan, the world (Jas 4:4, 1Jn 2:15, 16, 17) or our flesh (1Pe 2:11-note; Ga 5:16-note; Gal 5:17-note). When there is compromise with SIN ("*Amalekites*") by God's people, SIN begins its deadly, often insidious work (cp description of sin in He 3:13-note) to corrupt and ultimately to destroy (see relationship between sins and outcome of battles in Nu 14:42, 43, 44, 45, Jdg 6:1, 2, 3, 4+). The *Amalekites* must always be utterly blotted out. We must not deal lightly with the presence of sins in our life (He 12:1, 2- see notes He12:1; 2).

Sadly many often quote 1Jn 1:9: "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" as if it were a "*spiritual band-aid*" but then turn right around and immediately commit that sin again. We can be tempted to think that these personal sins are small (cf to the "little foxes" in Song 2:15 and see [Our Daily Bread "Tiny Evils, Big Fall"](#)) and that they really do not impact our lives and that we have a "*forgiveness credit card*" that lets us commit sins with impunity and without consequences. But we forget that our sins grieve the heart (cf Ge 6:3, Ezek 6:9, Ep 4:30, Heb 3:17) of a thrice Holy God and they negate our spiritual victory and disturb our inner peace (see above - study [Numbers 14](#) and [Jdg 6](#) [see notes] for effect of sin on war with Amalekites). Our sins are like a silent but potentially deadly malignant tumor -- once the cancer gain a foothold, it begins to metastasize to other parts of the body and ultimately brings death to the body. The best cure for aggressive cancer is total obliteration of the cancer cells -- to "*utterly blot them out*".

And so we began to appreciate the severity and seriousness of God's command to Israel to "blot out the memory of the Amalek from under heaven" in (Dt 25:19), noting that in (Ex 17:14) it is God Who says "I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

These seemingly contradictory verses remind us that in spiritual warfare, we are responsible for our part of the "blotting out" process, but it is ultimately our **Jehovah Nissi** Who gives the victory. Paul echoes this mysterious interaction of man's responsibility and God's sovereignty in (Phil 2:12, 13-see **notes** Php 2:12; 13) exhorting us as believers to

work out (present imperative = command to continually work at this task... in reliance upon the Holy Spirit in us [see next portion of verse] and God's provision of amazing, life transforming grace) (our) salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in (us), both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Click for a schematic depiction of this important spiritual principle)

As Puritan John Owen wrote "**Kill sin or it be killing you.**" (Owen's classic treatise [Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers- The Necessity, Nature and Means of It](#) is highly recommended -- it is a bit difficult to read through the old English but the reward is worth it!) And remember that God never calls us to do something He has not first equipped us to accomplish.

The Old Sin Nature Is a Unredeemable "Beast" - An illustration of the deadliness of sin comes from the tragic tale that began with a frantic 911 call from a woman who could only state that she needed help because she was being killed. When the police arrived, they found a bloody knife beside her lifeless body on the kitchen floor. Blood was spattered across the room, yet when the police examined the body, they found to their amazement not a single cut or puncture wound. The only evidence on her body was a large mark across her chest and neck. They then noticed a trail of blood leading into the next room. Following the blood they found a dying boa constrictor. The woman had apparently raised the snake as a pet. On this particular day, the snake had apparently wrapped itself around the woman as she prepared food in the kitchen. For whatever reason, she had allowed the snake to entwine her body. Once the muscular snake began to constrict itself, the woman had apparently sensed the danger. In a panic, she had grabbed a knife and began to slash away. She managed to mortally wound the snake, but she was killed in the process. This story is an incredible example of the **power of Sin** in our lives. We often take subtle compromises into our lives like an innocent pet. We think we can handle the snake without any real risk. Although we hear stories about the destruction of other people, we rationalize that they were simply weak. We can handle it! We think we know how far we can go. Thus we deal with sin flippantly and lightly. (from Hemphill, K: [The Names of God](#)) (cf the similar story of [Tiny Evils, Big Fall](#))

As alluded to several times the phrase "**war against Amalek from generation to generation**" is a picture of the ongoing warfare

every redeemed sinner experiences with his or her "*Amalekite*", the flesh nature, part of the process referred to as sanctification. (Click for an explanation of the relationship between salvation, sanctification and glorification). Every believer has 3 mortal enemies the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). Of these three only the flesh lives within our "temple!"

**Paul** alludes to this struggle explaining that "the **flesh** (like an "Amalekite") sets (present tense - continually sets) its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh for these are (present tense - continually) in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." (Galatians 5:17+ )

**Peter** exhorts us to prepare for a lifelong war writing...

"Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers (adopt the mindset of an alien) to (present tense - continually - THE ONLY WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS PUSHING AWAY IS BY JETTISONING SELF RELIANCE AND [RELYING WHOLLY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT](#) TO GIVE YOU THE DESIRE AND THE POWER! - cf Php 2:13NLT+) abstain from fleshly lusts (DESIREs THAT ARISE FROM OUR FALLEN SINFUL FLESH), which (present tense - continually) wage war (Greek word [strateuomai](#) gives us our English "strategize" -- does this give you a picture of the assaults waged by your indwelling sin nature? IT IS AN INSIDE JOB AND THUS NECESSITATES AN "INSIDE SOLUTION!" - THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT!) against the soul." (1 Peter 2:11+)

#### **Related Resources on the Devil/Satan:**

- Schemes of the Devil - notes equivalent to 80+ page booklet
- [Strategy of Satan by Warren Wiersbe](#) - borrow the book or listen to the 2 hr 36 min [audiobook free of charge](#)
- [Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible \(DDD\)](#) - borrow this book - see page 722-728
- [Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology](#) - PDF - scroll down to p343 - Chapter 19 - Angels and p356 - Chapter 20 - Satan and Demons

#### **FOLLOWING FROM GOTQUESTIONS.ORG ONE OF THE BEST SITES ON WEB FOR GIVING BIBLICALLY SOUND ANSWERS**

- [How, why, and when did Satan fall from heaven?](#)
- [Is Satan in hell? Where is Satan? How much power does Satan possess?](#)
- [Are Jesus and Satan brothers?](#)
- [Does Satan exist?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan is the accuser?](#)
- [Why did Satan think he could defeat God?](#)
- [Is Lucifer Satan? Does the fall of Lucifer describe Satan?](#)
- [What are the names of Satan?](#)
- [Was Satan an angel?](#)
- [Does Satan have to get God's permission before he can attack us?](#)
- [God vs. Satan - if God is all-powerful, why does He not just kill Satan?](#)
- [Is Satan the master of hell? Do Satan and his demons punish people in hell?](#)
- [Did God create Satan?](#)
- [What does Satan look like? What do demons look like?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"?](#)
- [Why are both Jesus and Satan referred to as the morning star?](#)
- [Who is Satan? Who is the devil?](#)
- [Does a believer have authority over Satan?](#)
- [Does Satan still have access to Heaven? Why does God allow Satan to enter Heaven, as recorded in the Bible?](#)
- [Why does God allow Satan to attack us?](#)
- [Is the devil / Satan a person or a force / personification of evil?](#)
- [How is Satan god of this world \(2 Corinthians 4:4\)?](#)
- [Does Satan have the power to control the weather?](#)
- [Does God love Satan?](#)
- [Can Satan read our minds or know our thoughts?](#)
- [If God knew that Satan would rebel, why did He create him?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan is the father of lies \(John 8:44\)?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan is prince of the power of the air \(Ephesians 2:2\)?](#)
- [Why did God allow Satan and the demons to sin?](#)
- [Was Satan in charge of music in Heaven?](#)

- [What is the synagogue of Satan in Revelation?](#)
- [Why is God going to release Satan after the 1000 years?](#)
- [Why were Michael and Satan disputing over the body of Moses \(Jude 9\)?](#)
- [Is the king of Tyre prophecy in Ezekiel 28 referring to Satan?](#)
- [Questions about Angels & Demons](#)
- [Why did Jesus say to Peter, "Get behind me Satan"?](#)
- [Was Satan the serpent in Genesis chapter 3?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan masquerades as an angel of light?](#)
- [Did Jesus fight Satan for the keys to the kingdom?](#)

Joe Temple in his sermon on [Exodus 17:8-16 The Christian's Battle](#) has the following comments -

### **Enmity Between the Flesh and the Spirit**

What is the lesson that we should learn from these historical facts? Let us go back to chapter 17 of Exodus and notice the very first word in the paragraph. It is the word "then": "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim." When was it that Amalek came to fight with Israel? It was after—notice carefully what I am saying—they had been delivered from the land of Egypt, which is typical of our salvation, and after they had partaken of the water from the smitten rock, which we have learned is typical of the coming of the Holy Spirit to take up His dwelling place in the life of a believer.

Are you following me? The important lesson is simply this: Just as the Israelites had no trouble with Amalek until after they were delivered from Egypt and had drunk of the rock that followed them (1 Corinthians 10:4), **you and I have no trouble with the flesh until after we have been born again and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.**

Haven't you been troubled by a great many more things since you came to know the Lord than you were before you came to know the Lord? Haven't you been faced with more temptations, more problems, more difficult times since you decided to live for the Lord than you were before? That is what Paul is talking about in Galatians, chapter 5, verse 16:

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For 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. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Notice verse 17 particularly: "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." This verse is talking about a born-again believer. It is talking about a born-again Christian in whom a continual struggle is going on between the flesh on the one hand and the Spirit on the other. Why is that? Because the individual in Galatians 5:17 has been born again.

Before you came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you had a carnal nature; it was a fleshly nature, and you did whatever the flesh told you to do. You may not like to admit that, but it is true. You walked according to the course of this world, according to the direction of the Devil, and that was all you ever considered doing. Some of you—I think all of us, to a greater or lesser degree—were so obedient to the flesh that we were not conscious of the rulership of the flesh. Things ran smoothly; there was no struggle of any description. Then you were born again, and the moment you were born again, the Holy Spirit took up His residence within you, and the old occupant that had been there from the day you were born did not like it. The moment the Holy Spirit took up residence within you, He began to crowd the flesh into a corner, so to speak. The Holy Spirit began to struggle, immediately began to contend. In verse 17, we read the spiritual description of the struggle:

Galatians 5:17 For 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.

Go back to our original story. The Israelites had no trouble with the Amalekites until after they had left Egypt and had drunk of the spiritual rock that followed them, the rock being Christ. You and I will have no trouble with the flesh until after we are born again and the Holy Spirit takes up His residence in our hearts. Then the trouble really begins. The flesh has to be dealt with, just as certainly as the Amalekites had to be dealt with.

### **The Way of Victory**

Someone might say, "Oh, that's true, but all you have to do is to get rid of the flesh and then everything will be all right." There are a lot of people who teach that they can get rid of the flesh. They teach that it can be done. There is only one thing wrong with that; the Bible doesn't teach that. **Just as certainly as in verse 16 of chapter 17 of the book of Exodus God said that there would be war with Amalek from generation to generation, you can expect to have a struggle with the flesh from one day to the next.** The only time the remembrance of Amalek was to be put out from under heaven was when all was well and settled at the end of their journey. You can be sure that the only time you will be free of the flesh is when the Lord Jesus Christ comes and we have changed this vile body for the glorious body that He has prepared for us (Philippians 3:21), or when we die and this corruption puts on incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:54). Then, and only then, will the remembrance of Amalek be blotted out. Then, and only then, will the flesh be forgotten.

I want us to remember that, because there are multitudes of God's children today who are living a life of constant defeat because they have not realized who Amalek is and what God says about him in the Word. You say, "You mean you don't have to live a life of constant defeat?" No, you don't. There is a way of victory, and that way of victory is illustrated in our story. Notice Exodus 17:9:

Exodus 17:9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

Moses said, "There are two ways to deal with Amalek. One way, Joshua, is that you are to go out and fight Amalek with the sword. I will go up on the mountain top with the rod of God in my hand. In those two ways, we will get the victory over Amalek." I would like to say as we draw the spiritual parallel that those are the two ways in which you and I are privileged to have victory over the flesh. If we can understand what happened, we will be able to understand its spiritual counterpart.

This is the first time the Israelites are found fighting; it is the first time they are told to fight. Remember when we read in Exodus 14:14 ? The Egyptians were behind them, the Red Sea was before them, and the mountains on either side. They did not know what to do. Did God say, "Go out and fight." ? No, that is not what He said. He said, "Stand still; the Lord will fight for you." Do you know why? Because their deliverance was God's business, just as our salvation is God's business.

### **Victory By the Sword of the Spirit**

Just as God purchased and completely paid for our salvation and we cannot add one bit to it, so God delivered the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. But after their deliverance from Egypt and their encounter with Amalek, it was necessary that they do something. They could not just sit down and say, "Everything is going to be all right. God fought for us once, He will fight for us again." That was not true. There is a time when the children of God must recognize that they are in a battle.

Turn with me, please, to the book of Ephesians, chapter 6, and notice in verse 12 a reference to what I have just said:

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The various portions of the armor are presented to us, but we are not interested in them at the moment, for this particular battle. But in verse 17 we have one weapon brought to our attention, and we are interested in it:

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Now, go back to Exodus, chapter 17, and remember that Moses said to Joshua, "Go out and fight against Amalek." In verse 13, we find the manner in which Joshua fought against Amalek:

Exodus 17:13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

If you and I are to gain victory over the flesh, which is ever with us, if we are to gain victory over our Amalek, it will be necessary for us to take the sword which God has given to us and discomfit Amalek with the sword. That is why, in chapter 4 of the book of James, we are told that we should resist the Devil, and he will flee from us (James 4:7+). You say, "What has the Devil to do with the flesh?" The Devil, Beloved, would have no power over you were it not for the flesh. The Devil appeals to the flesh, and the flesh responds to the Devil, and that is what creates the problems in your life. If you will learn to discomfit Amalek with the sword, which is the Word of God, if you will learn to resist, then there can be victory.



## BE KILLING SIN OR IT BE KILLING YOU

The great Puritan theologian John Owen covered the topic of our life long war against sin in his treatise "Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers" writing that

**Mortification** abates [sin's] force, but doth not change its nature. Grace changeth the nature of man, but nothing can change the nature of sin....Destroyed it may be, it shall be, but cured it cannot be....If it be not overcome and destroyed, it will overcome and destroy the soul. And herein lies no small part of its power....It is never quiet, [whether it is] conquering [or] conquered. **Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work?** be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you." ([Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers- The Necessity, Nature and Means of It](#))

Every honest Christian will testify that becoming a believer does not erase the tendency to sin and that there is a constant need to "**blot out the Amalekites**". The new (and old) believer still derives pleasure from sin (Heb 11:25-). We all continue to struggle with sinful desires. Those evil predispositions and habits are so deeply ingrained in the flesh nature that we continue **spiritual warfare** against them even into old age! Only glorification sets us totally, gloriously free from the presence and pleasure of sin! But in the meantime, all genuine believers are capable of temporarily (but not **habitually**) falling into appalling, shameful sins. The truth is, we each commit sins daily. Our thoughts are not what they ought to be. Our time is often wasted on frivolous and worldly pursuits as the Amalekites maraud our poorly protected "stragglers in the rear". And our hearts may even grow cold to the things of God.

**Why does all this happen if sin's dominion is broken?** We do not have time or space to deal with this critical topic in this discussion of Jehovah-nissi, but for those who have the time we would refer you to the more extensive treatment of this critical subject in a multipart paper entitled, "[The Actual Practice of Mortification](#)" by Greg Herrick based on the original work (which is somewhat more difficult to read because of the archaic English) by John Owens, "[Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers](#)" (aka "blotting out the Amalekites")

## WHO WERE THE AMALEKITES?

The Amalekites were a formidable tribe of nomads living in the area south of Canaan, between [Mount Seir](#) and the Egyptian border. The Amalekites are not listed in the table of nations in Genesis 10, as they did not originate until after Esau's time. In Numbers 24:20 Balaam refers to the Amalekites as "first among the nations," but he most likely meant only that the Amalekites were the first ones to attack the Israelites upon their exodus from Egypt or that the Amalekites were "first" in power at that time. Genesis 36 refers to the descendants of Amalek, the son of Eliphaz and grandson of Esau, as Amalekites (verses 12 and 16). So, the Amalekites were somehow related to, but distinct from, the [Edomites](#).

Scripture records the long-lasting feud between the Amalekites and the Israelites and God's direction to wipe the Amalekites off the face of the earth (Exodus 17:8–13; 1 Samuel 15:2; Deuteronomy 25:17). Why God would call His people to exterminate an entire tribe is a difficult question, but a look at history may give some insight.

Like many desert tribes, the Amalekites were nomadic. Numbers 13:29 places them as native to the [Negev](#), the desert between Egypt and Canaan. The Babylonians called them the Sute, Egyptians the Sittiu, and the Amarna tablets refer to them as the Khabbati, or "plunderers."

The Amalekites' unrelenting brutality toward the Israelites began with an attack at Rephidim (Exodus 17:8–13). This is recounted in Deuteronomy 25:17–19 with this admonition: "Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and attacked all who were lagging behind [typically women and children]: they had no fear of God. When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!"

The Amalekites later joined with the Canaanites and attacked the Israelites at Hormah (Numbers 14:45). In Judges they banded with the Moabites (Judges 3:13) and the Midianites (Judges 6:3) to wage war on the Israelites. They were responsible for the repeated destruction of the Israelites' land and food supply.

In 1 Samuel 15:2–3, God tells King Saul, "I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they

came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them, put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys."

In response, King Saul first warns the Kenites, friends of Israel, to leave the area. He then attacks the Amalekites but does not complete the task. He allows the Amalekite King [Agag](#) to live, takes plunder for himself and his army, and lies about the reason for doing so. [Saul's rebellion](#) against God and His commands is so serious that he is rejected by God as king (1 Samuel 15:23).

The escaped Amalekites continued to harass and plunder the Israelites in successive generations that spanned hundreds of years. First Samuel 30 reports an Amalekite raid on [Ziklag](#), a Judean village where David held property. The Amalekites burned the village and took captive all the women and children, including two of David's wives. David and his men defeated the Amalekites and rescued all the hostages. A few hundred Amalekites escaped, however. Much later, during the reign of King Hezekiah, a group of Simeonites "killed the remaining Amalekites" who had been living in the hill country of Seir (1 Chronicles 4:42-43).

The last mention of the Amalekites is found in the book of Esther where [Haman the Agagite](#), a descendant of the Amalekite king Agag, connives to have all the Jews in Persia annihilated by order of King Xerxes. God saved the Jews in Persia, however, and Haman, his sons, and the rest of Israel's enemies were destroyed instead (Esther 9:5-10).

The Amalekites' hatred of the Jews and their repeated attempts to destroy God's people led to their ultimate doom. Their fate should be a warning to all who would attempt to thwart God's plan or who would curse what God has blessed (see Genesis 12:3). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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## THE LITTLE FOXES

In Song of Solomon we read "Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom." (Song 2:15+).

One application equates the "little foxes" with "little" sins. This begs the question - are any sins really "little?" And "How does your garden grow?" (from nursery rhyme "[Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary](#)")

A man was walking down a hill in the woods when he stepped on a little twig. The twig rolled and he fell. As he got up and went on his way, he thought to himself "If that had been a big log, I would have seen it and climbed over. There would have been far less likelihood of my falling, for I would have been aware of the danger." The very fact that the twig was so small was what made it so dangerous.

In our daily spiritual walk, we are continually being tempted and continually in danger of being carried away and enticed by our own lusts and if we give in the result is sin (James 1:14-15+). The devil is a tempter and he cleverly places little temptations (like little twigs) that so easily entangle us (cf Hebrews 12:2+) and defeat us. His "little twigs" are generally more effective than "big logs" partly because they are so often unnoticed and partly because even if we do notice them, we consider them too small to really make a significant difference in our spiritual walk. In short we too often fail to heed Jesus' commands to "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mt 26:41+)

Application - Beware of the "little foxes," those temptations that seem so trivial and minimal as to easily escape our notice. Remember that it was only a "little thing," (one bite of a forbidden fruit) through which "sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." (Ro 5:12+)

As Puritan **John Owen** wisely asked "Do you mortify? (read Colossians 3:5+) Do you make it your DAILY work? Be ALWAYS at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you." (See under point #1 - [Of the Mortification of Sin](#))

And the good news is that we are not left to ourselves to kill sin but as Paul instructed "By the Spirit (God's provision of supernatural power) put to death (Our responsibility) the deeds of the body and you will live." (Ro 8:13+). **Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones** once said this was the "most important statement in regard to sanctification" in the entire New Testament. (see link to sermon below).

Vice is a monster of so frightful [mien](#) (manner)

As to be hated needs but to be seen,

Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We, first endure, then pity, then embrace.  
-- Alexander Pope - Essay on Man

Sins are like circles in the water when a stone is thrown into it - one produces another. When anger was in Cain's heart (Ge 4:6-7), murder was not far off (Ge 4:8).

So let us "encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:13+)

#### Related Resources:

- [Are You Entangled?](#)
- [Deceitfulness of Sin](#)
- [Backsliding](#)
- [Backsliding-Quotes, Devotionals, Illustrations](#)
- [Commentary on Romans 8:12-13](#)
- [What is mortification of sin / the flesh?](#)
- [What does it mean that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak?](#)
- [What is the flesh?](#)
- [What is the enemy within?; What is the sin nature?](#)
- [The Way of Sanctification - Romans 8:12-13](#) - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - Mp3
- [Sin and the Christian - Romans 8:12-13](#) - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - Mp3
- [Sin and the Body - Romans 8:12-13](#) - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - Mp3
- [Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers](#) - John Owen
- [Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers](#) - Greg Herrick
- [Mortification of Sin](#) - Master's Seminary Journal: Volume 5: #1, Spring, 1994 - John MacArthur

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#### Tiny Evils, Big Fall

Read: Ecclesiastes 9:16-10:10

Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment, . . . so does a little folly o one respected for wisdom and honor. —  
Ecclesiastes 10:1

It started as a seedling on the slopes of the Colorado Rockies some 500 years ago. For centuries it had stood tall, enduring violent winds, lightning strikes, blizzards, even avalanches. Now, however, the once-towering tree is just a mound of decaying wood.

What caused its demise? A horde of beetles had attacked it, gnawing away until that skyscraper of nature surrendered to those tiny pests and toppled over.

That's also the tragic story of many Christians. For long years they stood tall for God. They resisted temptations, weathered crises, and were bold in the strength divinely provided. But little sins began to eat away at their lives—little lies, little compromises with greed or lust, sins that gradually eroded their character. And suddenly they fell.

Song of Solomon 2:15 states, "Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines." This colorful Old Testament verse should sound a loud alarm in our consciences. We must not tolerate the little evils that eat away at the roots of our lives. Otherwise, our once-strong witness for Christ will become a silenced casualty of sin. Let's confess those "tiny" evils to God now, before they lead to a big fall. By Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Nothing between, like worldly pleasure,  
Habits of life, though harmless they seem,  
Must not my heart from Him ever sever—  
He is my all! There's nothing between. —Tindley

A big fall begins with a little stumble.

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**Illustration** - It was reported recently that an enormous pine tree in the mountains of Colorado had fallen victim to a pine beetle and died. According to locals, up to that point the tree was thought to be indestructible. It had survived fourteen lightning strikes and many years of Colorado winters, including avalanches and fires. But it was eventually brought down from within by a tiny insect that

did its work silently. Compare the effect of "secret sin" in our heart. If you have one (or several), confess them to the Lord and seek His gift of repentance, that you might not be brought down by years of this sin "gnawing" at your soul.

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**SIN IS LIKE A BOA CONSTRICTOR!** - Are you being deceived by sin and tolerating it like a **pet**? If you are, then you need to remember the fate of the man with the **pet boa constrictor** (Do a Google search - use the following three words in your search keeping the quotation marks as written >> "pet boa" killed). After 15 years of living with his owner, one day the "pet boa" would not let its "owner" out of its grip resulting in the owner's tragic death. Wild animals remain wild and so does [Sin](#). Do not be deceived (Stop being deceived)!

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A slight sore, neglected, may prove of fatal consequence, and so may a slight sin slighted and left unrepented of. --Matthew Henry

The way of sin is downhill. A man cannot stop himself when he will.--Matthew Henry

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**No Small Deviations in God's Economy!** - In St. Louis there is a railroad switchyard. One particular switch begins with just the thinnest piece of steel to direct a train away from one main track to another. If you were to follow those two tracks, however, you would find that one ends in San Francisco, the other in New York. Sin is like that. Just a small deviation from God's standards can place us far afield from our intended destination. Don't be deceived by the world, flesh or devil who say "It's no big deal!" Wrong! (Sin seeks to rule over us and to kill us = Ps 19:13-[note](#), [See [Spurgeon's comment - scroll down](#)] Ps 119:133+, 1Jn 5:16+)

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**SIN'S POWER** - Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman told of a distinguished minister, Dr. Howard, from Australia who preached very strongly on the subject of sin. After the service, one of the church officers came to counsel with him in the study. "Dr. Howard," he said, "we don't want you to talk as openly as you do about man's guilt and corruption, because if our boys and girls hear you discussing that subject they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but do not speak so plainly about sin. "The minister took down a small bottle and showing it to the visitor said, "You see that label? It says strychnine -- and underneath in bold, red letters the word 'Poison!' Do you know, man, what you are asking me to do? You are suggesting that I change the label. Suppose I do, and paste over it the words, 'Essence of Peppermint'; don't you see what might happen? Someone would use it, not knowing the danger involved, and would certainly die. So it is, too, with the matter of sin. The milder you make your label, the more dangerous you make your poison!" (Source Unknown)

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**Entanglement by the Cords of one's own Sin** - Not long after a wealthy contractor had finished building the Tombs prison in New York, he was found guilty of forgery and sentenced to several years in the prison he had built! As he was escorted into a cell of his own making, the contractor said, "I never dreamed when I built this prison that I would be an inmate one day." (cp Nu 32:23, Pr 5:22 - [See Captured by Iniquity and Held by Cords of one's own Sin - A Study](#))

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**The Danger of "Small Sins" Illustrated** - Imagine all the obstacles a person might have to overcome if he were to walk from New York City to San Francisco. One man who accomplished this rare achievement mentioned a rather surprising difficulty when asked to tell of his biggest hurdle. He said that the toughest part of the trip wasn't traversing the steep slopes of the mountains or crossing hot, dry, barren stretches of desert. Instead, he said, "The thing that came the closest to defeating me was the sand in my shoes." - Our Daily Bread.

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**Slavery to Sin** - Radio personality Paul Harvey tells the story of how an Eskimo kills a wolf. The account is grisly, yet it offers fresh insight into the consuming, self-destructive nature of sin. "First, the Eskimo coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he adds another layer of blood, and another, until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood. "Next, the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it, tasting the fresh frozen blood. He begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly now, harder and harder the wolf licks the blade in the arctic night. So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf does not notice the razor-sharp sting of the naked blade on his own tongue, nor does he recognize the instant at which his insatiable thirst is being satisfied by his OWN warm blood. His carnivorous appetite just craves more--until the dawn finds him dead in the snow!" It is a fearful thing that people can be "consumed by their own lusts." Only God's grace keeps us from the wolf's fate. - Chris T. Zwingelberg.

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**Harmless Little Sins?** - What happened to the great city of Ephesus? Often mentioned in the New Testament, it was one of the cultural and commercial centers of its day. Located at the mouth of the Cayster River, it was noted for its bustling harbors, its broad avenues, its gymnasiums, its baths, its huge amphitheater, and especially its magnificent Temple of Diana. What happened to bring

about its gradual decline until its harbor was no longer crowded with ships and the city was no longer a flourishing metropolis? Was it smitten by plagues, destroyed by enemies, or demolished by earthquakes? No, silt was the reason for its downfall--silent and nonviolent silt. Over the years, fine sedimentary particles slowly filled up the harbor, separating the city from the economic life of the sea traders. Little evil practices, little acts of disobedience may seem harmless. But let the silt of sin gradually accumulate, and we will find ourselves far from God. Life will become a spiritual ruin. In the book of Hebrews we are warned of the danger of "the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13). James said that the attractive pleasures of sin are really a mask covering death (Jas 1:15-notes). ([Ibid](#))

**God forbid that we let the silt of sin accumulate in our lives** --[Vernon Grounds](#) ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets](#)). Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

*Christian, walk carefully, danger is near!  
On in your journey with trembling and fear;  
Snares from without and temptations within  
Seek to entice you once more into sin.  
--Anon.*

**Little sins add up to big trouble.**

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**Attraction to Sin** - Several years ago our family visited Niagara Falls. It was spring, and ice was rushing down the river. As I viewed the large blocks of ice flowing toward the falls, I could see that there were carcasses of dead fish embedded in the ice. Gulls by the score were riding down the river feeding on the fish. As they came to the brink of the falls, their wings would go out, and they would escape from the falls. I watched one gull which seemed to delay and wondered when it would leave. It was engrossed in the carcass of a fish, and when it finally came to the brink of the falls, out went its powerful wings. The bird flapped and flapped and even lifted the ice out of the water, and I thought it would escape. But it had delayed too long so that its claws had frozen into the ice. The weight of the ice was too great, and the gull plunged into the abyss. The material possessions of this world can entrap us if we become too attached to them. They will take us to our destruction if we cannot give them up. And as Sweeting observed, "Oh, the danger of delay!" - George Sweeting

Sin will take you farther than you ever thought you'd stray  
Sin will leave you so lost, you think you'll never find your way  
Sin will keep you longer than you ever thought you'd stay  
Sin will cost you more than you ever thought you'd pay

## TWENTY REASONS NOT TO SIN!

Just for "fun" take a moment to review the following list of **20 reasons not to commit sins** (hamartano)...

1. A little sin leads to more sin.
2. Sin invites the discipline of God.
3. The time spent in my sin is forever wasted.
4. My sin never pleases but always grieves the God Who loves me.
5. My sin places a greater burden on my spiritual leaders.
6. In time, sin always brings heaviness to my heart.
7. Others, including my family, suffer consequences due to my sin.
8. My sin makes the enemies of God rejoice.
9. Sin deceives me into believing I have gained when in reality I have lost.
10. Sin may keep me from qualifying for spiritual leadership.
11. The supposed benefits of sin will never outweigh the consequences of disobedience.
12. Repenting of sin is a painful process.



13. My sin may influence others to sin.
14. My sin may keep others from knowing Christ.
15. Sin makes light of the Cross, upon which Christ died for the very purpose of taking away my sin.
16. It is impossible to sin and follow the Spirit at the same time.
17. Others more earnest than I have been destroyed by just such sins.
18. God chooses not to hear the prayers of those who cherish their sin (Ps 66:18).
19. My unwillingness to reject this sin now grants it authority over me greater than I understand.
20. I promised God He would be the Lord of my life. (Source unknown)

## **THE HOLY WAR.**

### **Exodus 17:8-16.**

### **JAMES SMITH**

If, like the children of Israel, we have been delivered from bondage and separated unto God, we may also expect to be attacked by the enemy (John 15:20). The hindermost and weak and feeble ones are sure to suffer first (Deuteronomy 25:18). Borderland Christians get much buffeting; beware of the lusts that lie in ambush (1 Samuel 15:2), the Diabolonians, as Bunyan calls the lusts that lodge in wall (flesh) of Man-soul. They are the sworn enemies of the Spirit of Christ. As an illustration of the Christian's spiritual conflict, let us notice—

#### **I. Amalek, or, the Pilgrim's Foe. Well may we ask—**

1. Who was He? Amalek has not a very honorable pedigree. He is the offspring of Esau, the brother of Jacob (closely connected), who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, "being carnal," and so is a type of the flesh. Amalek, like that which is carnal, was the first of the nations, but, like the flesh, he is doomed to perish (Numbers 24:20). "That which is bone of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6).
2. When Came He? He did not annoy them until they got to Rephidim (resting places), and had drank of the smitten rock. "That Rock was Christ." The Christless know nothing about the conflict between flesh and spirit, the world loves its own. The onslaught took place while Israel was resting. The unguarded moments of inactivity are fit opportunities for the Amalek lusts of the flesh.

#### **II. Joshua, or the Fight of Faith. The lusts which war against the soul are overcome through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 7:25).**

1. The Means of Faith. "Joshua chose out men" (v. 9). Faith must have something to work by—faith which works by love. The believers' chosen ones are the Blood, the Spirit, and the Word. These are the Christian's "three mighties." Put on the whole armor of God, take the shield of faith.
2. The Work of Faith. "Joshua went out and fought" (v. 10). Hope waits, love submits, faith actively presses on, it is the aggressive grace that attacks and wins the fight. "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). "I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18).

#### **III. Moses, or the Spirit of Prayer. Every "over-comer" constantly maintains a twofold attitude, the upward and the outward.**

1. Towards God. There is the steady, uplifted hands of unwavering faith (1 John 5:4). It is the upward look of the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. This holy privilege and power is within the reach of all, who, like Moses, stands on the hill-top of communion with God.
2. Toward the Enemy. There must be fearless and unyielding determination. While the hands were uplifted Joshua prevailed. The source of overcoming power is in God. It is communicated to and through those who are in living sympathetic touch with Him. "If you abide in Me, and My word abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done" (John 15:7). "When I cry unto You, then shall mine enemies turn back" (Psalm 56:9).

#### **IV. Aaron and Hur, or the Promises of God. How often the precious promises of God have acted the part of Aaron and Hur to our feeble intercessions.**

1. The Promises are Strong. "They stayed up his hands" (v. 12). The supplicating hands of Moses soon grow weary. The time of definite prayer is a testing time. It is here we feel most intensely our utter weakness and the need of supporting promises. "Take with you words," the supporting, unfailing words of Him who cannot lie. Lean your arm of feeble prayer upon His sure Word of promise.

2. The Promises are Steady. "And his hands were steady" (v. 12). Unsteady hands will not receive much from the Lord (James 1:6, 7). The promises of God never tremble. We may have weary and shaky hands, but we have an unshaking God who faints not, neither is weary (Isaiah 40:28, 29). "He gives power to the faint." "Uphold me with Your free Spirit." Steady and sure wins the day. God's promise to Abraham wrought in him unstaggering faith. Keep steadily trusting and your God will keep steadily conquering. "I will trust and not be afraid" (Isaiah 12:2).

## RELATED RESOURCES on Spiritual Warfare and Mortification of Sin

See **Exposition on Spiritual Warfare**

- Ephesians 6:10
- Ephesians 6:11
- Ephesians 6:12
- Ephesians 6:13
- Ephesians 6:14
- Ephesians 6:15
- Ephesians 6:16
- Ephesians 6:17
- Ephesians 6:18

### SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL

- See in depth discussion of the vitally important topic [Schemes of the Devil](#)

### RESISTING THE ROARING LION

- Exposition of 1 Peter 5:8
- Exposition of 1 Peter 5:9

### Wayne Barber on Spiritual Warfare

- EPHESIANS 6:10-18 BY WAYNE BARBER PT 1 of 7

### John Owen

- [Mortification of Sin in Believers \(eBook\)](#) - updated to modern English (Epub, Mobi, Pdf formats)

### John MacArthur

- [How To Kill Sin in your Life](#) - John MacArthur
- [Mortification of Sin - 20 page paper](#) - John MacArthur (Excellent summary of how to kill sin)

### Greg Herrick - "Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers" - An Outline, Exposition and Summary

- [1. John Owen—His Life and Work](#)
- [2. A Look at Romans 8:13](#)
- [3. Even the "Best of Us" Are Called to Mortify Sin](#)

- [4. The Life Giving Spirit Authors the Work of Mortification](#)
- [5. Power in the Christian Life Depends on Mortification](#)
- [6. To Mortify Sin—Negatively Considered](#)
- [7. To Mortify Sin—Positively Considered](#)
- [8. General Rule #1: A Man Must Be A Believer](#)
- [9. General Rule #2: There Must Be Universal Sincerity of Obedience](#)
- [10. Particular Direction #1: Consider Dangerous Symptoms Attending Sin](#)
- [11. Particular Direction #2: Get A Clear Sense of the Guilt of Sin](#)
- [12. Particular Direction #3-7: Guilt, Disposition, and Desire for Deliverance](#)
- [13. Particular Direction #8: Meditate on God's Greatness](#)
- [14. Particular Direction #9: How to Have Peace](#)
- [15. The Actual Practice of Mortification](#)

#### **Sinclair Ferguson**

- [How to Mortify Sin](#)

#### **THE METAPHOR OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER**

- Soldier Illustrations
- Exposition of 2 Timothy 2:3-4
- Three Kinds of Soldiers - Ten Principles of Warfare
- Roman Soldier by Edward Gibbon (Decline & Fall of Roman Empire)
- The Roman Soldier - Description from Jewish Historian Josephus
- A Few Soldier Stories and Sermons

**John Piper** - excellent material on general subject of mortification of sin, etc:

- [The Chief Design of My Life: Mortification and Universal Holiness](#)
- [When the "Want To" and the "Ought To" Don't Match](#)
- [Hope-Giving Promises for Triumph over Sin](#)
- [Kill Sin with the Word of God](#)
- [A Passion for Purity Vs Passive Prayers](#)
- [How to Kill Sin, Part 1](#)
- [How to Kill Sin, Part 2](#)
- [How to Kill Sin, Part 3](#)
- [How Dead People do Battle with Sin](#)
- [The War Within: Flesh Vs. Spirit](#)
- [Why and How We Walk According to the Spirit](#)
- [How the Spirit Does What the Law Could Not Do](#)

**ILLUSTRATION** - During the 1982 Falkland Islands conflict, the British Royal Navy felt that its ships were safe from attack because of a sophisticated defense system that identified enemy missiles and shot them down. Attack after attack was repelled with no damage to a British ship. Then the unexpected happened. The 3,500-ton destroyer HMS Sheffield was sunk by a single missile fired from an Argentine fighter jet. Later, an investigation revealed that the Sheffield's defenses did pick up the incoming missile, correctly identifying it as a French-made Exocet. But the computer was programmed to ignore Exocets as friendly. So the ship was sunk by a missile it saw coming and could have destroyed.

Christians who want to have a pure heart and mind in our impure society are like battleships floating on the open sea. Constant bombardments of sensual missiles are fired our way every day. If our heart, our defense system, allows missiles that we should avoid to penetrate our mind and soul, we're in big trouble. Spiritually, we will begin to sink. Guard your heart. Realize the Lord is examining your will, your heart, your motives.