

## Three-Part Sanctification and Sin in Members

Once God shows you that the old man and the power of sin were crucified with Christ, you might be scratching your head and wondering, “Why do I still have sinful cravings?” Excellent question! When you were crucified with Christ, only your spirit, where sin ruled, was crucified. **Your (spirit) was immediately and forever changed—saved.** Your body and soul were not crucified or born again.

### Three-Part Sanctification

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Everyone is born “dead in sin,” with the power of sin residing in our spirit. The power of sin also corrupted our bodies with unrighteous lust and desires and darkened our souls (mind, will, and emotions). Now that we have a new spirit, God can work in us to complete the work He began, extending redemption to our souls and bodies.

- The believer has a **new spirit**, which is holy and righteous.
- The believer’s soul is **being renewed** as we walk by faith.
- The believer’s body **will be made new** in the resurrection.
- The believer’s spirit, soul, and body are sanctified. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit, set apart to God, with a holy purpose.

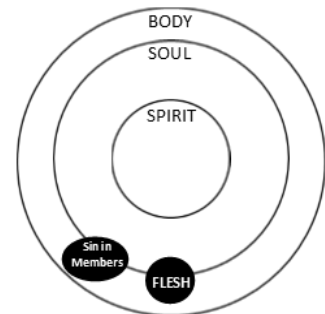


“Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, bringing the whole man more and more under the influence of the life of Christ until we realize Christ as the Vine and ourselves as the abiding branch.(John 15:5) God is the Sanctifier, and faith is the only means of sanctification. 1 Peter 1:9 says, ‘receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.’”<sup>1</sup>

### Sin in Members

Believers are spiritually dead to the ruling power of sin because Christ lives in us. **The presence of Christ prohibits the power of sin in your spirit.** But your soul and body were not crucified and made new, and therefore, sin still resides in our unredeemed bodies.

Paul names the unholy passions of our body as “sin in our members.” Sin in our members is like a sliver in you. It is in your body. It causes you pain, and it makes its presence known to you. But the sliver, like sin in your members, is not you!



Paul understood that sinful desires from an unredeemed body might be confusing. **He didn’t want you to doubt that you are a new creation.** In Romans 7:22-23, Paul explains that “sin in our members” resists God’s divine law, even though our new spirit yearns for godliness. He emphasized this so you will not doubt the completed work of God, regardless of the lusts of the flesh.

<sup>1</sup> Easton, M. G, *Easton’s Bible dictionary*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893

## Responding to Sin in Members

Often, the believer tries to overcome sinful desires and temptation through willpower. Romans 8:13 says to “put to death the deeds of the body by the spirit,” not self-effort. Because willpower eventually fails to overcome temptations, many assume that sin still has mastery over them. This is not true because you are one spirit with Christ, who died to the ruling power of sin once for all—for you!

Also, because our body still has sinful desires, some conclude that they have a sinful nature. Paul explicitly said sin is “in our members,” our unregenerate body. **Now that Christ is your spiritual life, your spirit does and cannot have sinful desires.** However, your body is prone to sinful desires. What can we do?

Right after explaining that he had “sin in his members,” Paul asks the question that you, too, may ask. “Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord!” (Romans 7:25) Did you catch those two power points? He said this “body” of death, placing sin in your body, not your spirit! And most importantly, he did not put you in charge of your victory. Who will free you from yielding to temptation from sin in your members? God, the Sanctifier, through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Sanctification is a work of faith. As we present ourselves to the Spirit, instead of trying to resist through willpower, the Spirit works in us until we are more than conquerors. **Remember, greater is Christ in us than anything in the world, including the sin in our members.**

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;  
for these are in opposition to one another. Galatians 5:17

Again, the battle against fleshly lust is not yours. The sinful lusts are opposed to the Spirit, not to you personally. It is the flesh and the Spirit that are in opposition. Our job is to trust and invite the Holy Spirit to empower us to say “no” to all ungodliness and “yes” to all godliness.

If you are living according to the flesh [sinful desires and self-effort], you must die [to that way of living];  
but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live [overcome]. Romans 8:13

As we present ourselves to God in weakness, choosing to forsake temptation and self-efforts, the Spirit puts to death the deeds (lusts) of the body. This may sound too good or easy to be true. **That is exactly why the gospel is called good news! You are not on your own against temptation.** Grace will teach you to say “no” to all ungodliness and “yes” to all godliness. Count on Christ in you!