**Changed Into His Image**

***Lesson Five: Mortifying Your Flesh – Romans 6:6***

**Introduction**: The “flesh” has a very powerful influence in our lives, even after salvation. In order to see true biblical change occur, it is essential that we understand how we are to mortify or “deaden” our flesh. The apostle Paul gives us a wonderful outline of how we can mortify our flesh in Romans 6.

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

* Explain the meaning of the three steps of mortification in Romans 6 (know, reckon, yield), and how our identification with Christ at salvation makes these steps all possible.
* Recognize the importance of refusing to obey or to feed the flesh.
* Understand why God-dependent self-denial is crucial to flesh-free living.

1. **Mortifying a Motorcycle**
   1. Let up on the throttle to cut down on the amount of fuel to the engine.
   2. Apply the brakes to reduce forward motion.
   3. Disengage the clutch to prohibit the engine’s power from driving the rear wheel.
   4. While this is essential for stopping the forward motion of a motorcycle, how does it apply to a life that is out of control?
2. **Mortification is the Responsibility of the Believer.** 
   1. The word “mortify” literally means to “put to death.”
   2. In the New Testament, it means to completely cease to do what the flesh wants to do.
   3. When we “mortify” the “deeds of the body,” we will stop their action by dealing with the indwelling sin that motivates them. We have mortified the “flesh” or killed its influence on us for the moment, but we have not eliminated its existence.
   4. It is obeying the lusts of the flesh that puts a man’s life in a mess.
   5. Through the salvation in Jesus, we no longer have to obey the lusts of the flesh. (Romans 8:12-13)
   6. Understanding your position in Christ will lead to mortification. (Col. 3:1-5)
   7. Paul explains our responsibility in Romans 6.

1. **We Have to Know Some Things – Rom. 6:6, 9**
   1. We need to know that because of Christ’s death and resurrection, sin’s reign over us has been broken.
   2. We no longer have to obey evil desires.
   3. We have identified with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection.
   4. Before our identification with Christ, we were required to serve the flesh. We now have a choice!
   5. You can obey it if you want to, but your life is under new management.

Illustration: See Jim Berg’s illustration on page 96. A similar illustration is found in the work place. I worked for Lowe’s Home Improvement Warehouse. In the course of time, I learned their ways of doing business and much of the operation became like second nature. Let’s say that I went to work for The Home Depot. This would mean of course that I no longer worked for Lowe’s. The management of Lowe’s could call me to come in to work. I still remember how to do the work. I could easily pick it back up. The truth, however, is that I no longer serve Lowe’s. I have a new employer.

Application: The same is true in our spiritual lives. I remember all too well how to obey the lusts of the flesh. The truth, however, is that I have a new Master. As a believer, I now serve the Lord Jesus Christ. When my flesh calls for me to “clock in” I no longer have to obey. Knowing this is the first step. Two additional steps must follow.

1. **We Have to Reckon Some Things – Rom. 6:11**
   1. “Reckon” simply means to believe something to be true.
   2. We must take that which we know and personalize it.
   3. For example, you may know that the speed limit in a certain area is 45 mph. Knowing is the first step. You must now reckon that the speed limit applies to you.
   4. Now that you *know* that through Christ you no longer have to obey the lusts of your flesh, you must *reckon* this to be true for your life.
   5. We may *feel* as though we have to give in, but the *fact* is that we do not.
   6. You are going to have to take it by faith that these facts are true no matter how you feel.
2. **We Have to Yield Some Things – Rom. 6:13**
   1. We are all experts at “yielding.” We have done it for years, only to the wrong master.
   2. You have a choice between two masters: God and self.
   3. “We would like to think that in this or that sin, we have been *defeated*. The humbling reality is that we have been *disobedient*” (Berg 99).
   4. The Christian life is not easy, but it is not complicated.
   5. The flesh can be denied, and it must be denied.

“You got yourself into this mess by obeying your flesh and denying God, and the only way out is to start denying the flesh and obeying God” (Berg 99).

* 1. We are foolish to feed the flesh.

Illustration: A seat belt is always needed because danger is always present. (Berg 104).

Application: Since the flesh is always with us, self-denial is always needed because the danger is always present.

1. **Take Time to Reflect**

On page 103, Jim Berg uses the illustration of physicians who are concerned about contamination as they work with patients. “They are not less careful because ‘we live in a modern age.’ They are more careful because we live in a ‘corrupt age.’ In the same way, believers who are concerned about their spiritual health will be more careful in this increasingly corrupt culture” (103).

Use the questions below to help those in your class to consider the influences on their lives. See page 106 for an elaboration on each question.

* 1. Is your entertainment flesh-free?
  2. Is your pursuit of possessions flesh-free?
  3. Are your friendships flesh-free?

1. **Application for Life Change**
   1. Use the teachings of Romans 6 in your daily fight against the power of your fleshly nature. Carefully consider what you know, reckon and yield.
   2. Examine your life for areas where you are feeding the flesh.
   3. Don’t underestimate the strength of sin. When we see perversion of every type in our society, we are prone to blame it on genetics, environment, demonic activity, or another source. “What we are seeing in the majority of these situations is actually the result of ‘full-grown sin.’ A careful study of the first and third chapters of Romans should dispel our ‘head in the clouds’ attitude about the human heart.” (Berg 108).
   4. Experience spiritual growth by choosing to obey the right master.