

# (The Activity of the Holy Spirit) the Body of Death

by Peter Brandon

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*The sermon explores the conflict between the flesh and spirit in believers, emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit in achieving victory over sin and the hope of future transformation.*

**Duration:** 35:59

**Scripture:** Romans 7:12

**Topics:** "Conflict of the Flesh", "Victory in the Spirit"

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## Description

Peter Brandon discusses the struggle every believer faces with sin, as illustrated in Romans 7, emphasizing the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. He explains that the 'body of death' represents the sinful nature that clings to us, much like a corpse, and highlights the importance of recognizing this conflict to achieve victory over sin. Brandon shares personal experiences and encourages believers to acknowledge their struggles, as this conflict is a sign of salvation and the work of the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes that true victory comes not from willpower but through the Spirit, urging believers to mortify the flesh and live according to the Spirit's guidance.

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## Transcript

Now it's a very interesting study, the body of death and how to get delivered from it. And we're going to discuss the great conflict that exists in every believer's body. We'll read first of all from Romans 7. I won't read the whole chapter because already I've expounded this three years ago and you remember that I'm sure.

So we'll look at verse, uh, from verse 13. Romans 7, reading from verse 13. Or perhaps for better connection, verse 12.

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good.

That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. Now this is the experience of the apostle, probably as a Christian, battling with this evil thing called sin. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

For that which I do I allow not, and what I would that I do not, and what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that is good. So then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.

For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Now notice this verse. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemn sin in the flesh.

And the Lord will bless to us the reading of his word. When we come to Romans 7 we must remember it's the great chapter of conflict. And quite frankly when I was your age I wish someone had come to me with some down to earth expositions to explain how to get victory over the flesh.

I think if I can remember my own spiritual history I was tormented 12 years battling with this conflict. Now I'm not going to hold anything back. I'm not going to pretend that I'm any better than any of you.

I'm going to speak on some of my failures and the little victories that the Lord has given to me, so that somehow I can pass this information to you that you too might live a victorious Christian life. Now this body of death has two meanings. It has a spiritual meaning and I'm going to take that first.

And then it has a physical meaning because one day we're going to lose this body of death and we're going to have a body of life. We're going to have a new body. But I won't go into the details of that until we come to our last talk.

So then the body of death, what does it mean? In the time of the Romans when they were going to crucify a man because of murder, sometimes they would take the murderer and the person that he murdered and strap the murdered person to his back. And just before he was crucified, he would be bearing on his back the person he had murdered. And probably Paul has that in mind when he says, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Now what does that mean? Does it mean he had murdered? No.

But it means that his old evil flesh life that was with him was like a corpse that he couldn't get rid of. And it was like that corpse on the man's back who had murdered this man and he wanted to be released from it. But he couldn't.

And if you bear that in mind then you will see the awfulness of this thing called flesh. Now what basically is the meaning of the word flesh? Now I was going through this morning and there were five meanings to the word flesh. Now if I gave you the five I believe it would confuse you.

So I'm only going to reduce them down to two and there's the good meaning to the flesh and there's the bad meaning. Now the good meaning is this. Great is the mystery of godliness.

God was manifest in the flesh. That's 1 Timothy chapter 3. And then again it's repeated in 1 John chapter 1 that the Lord Jesus the Son of God was manifest in the flesh. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Now that is the good aspect of the flesh. It means the perfect humanity of the Lord Jesus. And in that flesh there wasn't one trace of Adam's sin.

The Lord Jesus was as pure as God himself. But when you come to Romans chapter 7 Paul says in me that in my flesh there dwells no good thing. Now that's Romans 7 and you will notice that's verse 18.

Now what does he mean? The flesh is the root of all sin. Please remember that. The flesh is the powerhouse of all iniquity.

Now if you could take out your flesh life and if you could see it you would see it as a massive Goliath. And if you could actually pull that giant to pieces you wouldn't find a speck of good in him. You see if we could see our flesh life the root of all sin all of us would be absolutely surprised.

Now there comes this question. Why doesn't God eradicate the flesh life so that we're not worried with it. If he could eradicate it and remove it like he removed sin then we would be at perfect peace.

But God always tests his people. You remember when he put in the garden two trees one of them was to test man's obedience. And God leaves the flesh in our life we shall see in a few moments it's already been condemned at the cross so we shall never go to hell for it.

But he leaves the flesh in our lives to see whether we obey its dictation or not. So God is always testing his people. If you go through the Old Testament you will see that every man that the Lord used was tested.

Abraham was tested. Joseph was tested. Jacob was tested.

David was tested. You see God is constantly testing. So when a person is born of God the Holy Spirit comes into a life that has been washed clean through the blood of Christ and therefore you have within you two natures.

One is called flesh and one is called spirit. Now the spirit nature is totally sinless and your flesh nature is totally evil. Again let me say this if you could take out your flesh nature and pull it to pieces if you like a better word if you would analyze it diagnose it you wouldn't find one speck of goodness in it.

That is why none of us should glory in men because even the best of us we have this flesh nature and we have a terrible trouble even the best of us. So you can't glory in men there's only one person you can glory in and that's the Lord Jesus. Now it is the will of God for us to go through conflict.

Now lots of Christians backslide because they misunderstand the conflict and if they were taught what the conflict really meant then it would save them from backsliding. So what we're going to see we're going to look at the apostle and we are going to see how this great man of God dealt with this ugly thing called the flesh. Now first of all let's think of the apostle.

He was the greatest Christian that ever lived I have no doubt in saying that. And yet the greatest Christian that ever lived had the bravery to take a leaf out of his private diary so that all Christians could read it. And here we see this great struggle that went on in the life of the apostle Paul again I repeat who was one of the greatest Christians that ever lived.

So if he had a conflict we should have all that conflict. Now the good news about the conflict. I led a man to the Lord in Hamilton in Scotland and quite frankly he was truly broken for his sins.

There was divine revelation he saw that Christ died for his sins. He was willing to make Jesus his Saviour and Lord and he knelt down and wept his way to the Lord. It was a lovely case of conduct.

I went back two years time and he stayed behind after one evening meeting and he said for the first six months it was wonderful but things started to go wrong. I said tell me. Well he said the old sins have all come back.

I said have they? Can you tell me what they are? Well not all no I said I don't want to be a father confessor but can you just enlighten me? Well he said I packed up swearing but in the last six months I've gone back to it. I said have you? He said yes. Then one or two other things I mentioned though it wouldn't be nice really for me to mention that.

I said did you do that? And then with tears in his eyes he said this I can't be saved. I said tell me do you hate those sins? And this is what he did. He showed me the white of his knuckles and he hit his fist like this.

He said I hate them, hate them. Oh I said hallelujah you're saved. He says but why? Well I said there's two natures before you were saved you only had one and you didn't worry about your failure.

Now you're saved you're worried about them. That shows that the spirit is operating in your life. You see there was a conflict.

Now I want to ask you a question. Have you got a conflict? Good. Have you ever been in the presence of God and said with tears Lord I've done it again? Have you? Have you ever questioned whether you're saved? Well I've done that many times.

Oh I had years of that. Broken. Now those who are there will get help.

If you've never been worried about your failures you do want to question whether you were really saved. Because unless there's a conflict in your life it's a proof that you've not been saved. And where there's a conflict you can say well it's a guarantee to me that I am saved.

Why? Because I'm conscious of two natures who are battling it out. We led a number of punks to the Lord. They came into the meeting in London and with red, white and blue haircuts, safety pins through their nose and ears, bother jackets all over them and they made us all afraid.

As you know the punks could turn over a congregation and cause havoc. Terrible thing to be in a service when there's been a free fight. And on one occasion we had that and I don't want that again.

Well these lads they didn't appreciate our singing so I said to them well don't come to the meeting while we're singing. Come just when I'm about to preach and it won't be too long just 25 minutes and you come. And they brought a crowd more.

These punks all red, white and blue haircuts. The girls were like witches and so on and they came every night. Well to cut a long story short five of them got saved.

And after about a year I saw one of them who was the leader and I said how are you getting on Simon? Very good he said I know I'm saved. He says but something's happening inside me. I said what's that? He said like a big punch up.

A punch up? I said yes. Now what he called a punch up the Bible calls a conflict. It's between the flesh and the spirit.

Now that's a sure sign that Simon was really saved. Now if you've got that conflict God can help you. Now why do we have this conflict? First of all to expose in us the presence of the flesh.

To show to us by real experience there's a power within us that we can't control. Now God will work on us until we discover by experience that in our bodies there is this monster called flesh and this monster is far greater than the law of our mind. And lots of Christians they have a battle with the flesh and it's willpower against sin power and they're always defeated.

You will never overcome the flesh power by willpower. Secondly it's to show the total depravity of our flesh. Now what does that mean? The conflict takes place in our life so that the Holy Spirit would show to us that in our flesh there dwells no good thing.

It's like Lazarus in his decomposed state it was said of him behold he here it comes stinker. And the flesh life in you can I say this is a real stinker. There's no good in it at all and it's totally and absolutely corrupt.

Now grip that. So two things we've learned. It exposes the presence of the flesh and it shows the total depravity of the flesh.

Thirdly it convinces us that we cannot improve the flesh. Now lots of people they believe that if they study the bible every day very carefully it will improve the flesh. Now don't misunderstand me.

It's a wonderful spiritual habit to study the bible every day. But it will never never improve your flesh. Then some people believe they must give themselves the prayer and fasting.

Thank God for prayer and fasting. But my dear friends I want to say this you can pray and you can fast until your muscles are like a sparrow's kneecap. But that will never reduce the efforts of the flesh.

Prayer is a wonderful thing. Let me not pour water upon the importance of prayer. It's absolutely vital.

But prayer will never reduce your flesh nature. It's a lovely thing to witness for the Lord Jesus and to witness every day. But witnessing for the Lord Jesus will not make the flesh life better.

Now let's grip it. There is nothing that we can do to improve the flesh. Nothing.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. It's totally corrupt. And then fourthly to produce in us a hatred for the flesh.

Now can you see what was happening in that young Scottish lad? He was saved. He realized that he had the flesh. But the conflict stimulated within him a hatred for the flesh.

Now in our flesh there are besetting sins. Now my besetting sin may not be your besetting sin. And your besetting sin may not be my besetting sin.

You see there are introverts and extroverts and introverts they have their sins and invariably their sins that relate to the spirit. They can be absolutely crippled with jealousy and bitterness. Extroverts generally they have their besetting sins and it's like anger and lust and things like that.

So our besetting sins differ. But the devil plays upon certain besetting sins such as lust in young people. And he argues the whole thing out of proportion.

We mustn't allow him to do that. But all these sins of course are evil. But all our besetting sins are different.

Now it would be unwise to do this. In fact if you ever heard this being done it would be wise to remove yourself from the congregation. But if we all stood up and spoke about our besetting sins you would find that they all would be different.

Now we must remember that these besetting sins all come from the flesh. And they are the things that constantly defeat us. Now if we are going to get victory we must have a profound hatred for that particular thing.

Now if you make excuses for your besetting sins you will never get victory over them. But if you say like that Scottish lad, I hate them, hate them, you're two-thirds on the way of victory. So what does that mean in terms that we can understand.

Supposing now your besetting sin is temper. If you make excuses for it you'll never get victory. But if you look at the thing right in the face and say, I hate the living sight of you.

Then my dear friends you're almost there. Now what about this awful thing called lust, physical lust that young people are plagued with. Now if you make excuses for it you will never get victory.

But if you look at it square in the face and say again, I hate the living sight of it. It's spoiling my life. It's making me a dirty vulgar person.

I want victory over it. Then God can help you. So then it produces in us a hatred for the flesh.

And then lastly it stimulates in us a desire for victory. You listen to these words. Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.

He looked at his flesh life and it was like Lazarus's body when it was decomposing. He says Lord I want to be delivered from that ugly thing. Now can I make this practical in order to help you.

Are you there? Have you reached a position where this conflict is raging within you and you're getting no victory at all and you want the victory. Now we're going to learn that victory tomorrow morning. And it's a wonderful victory when God reveals that to us.

But so that we get the insight of it. We've seen now what this body of death is. It's the body of the flesh and it's the body that's in real conflict.

Now Paul's going to show to us a little of the victory. So shall we turn to Romans 8 and we'll look at verses 11 and 12 and 13. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal body by his spirit that dwelleth in you.

Therefore brethren we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh. But if you live after the flesh you shall die. But if through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body you shall live.

For as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God. Now you will see from that reading that the body of has two meanings. First of all it has a spiritual meaning where we see that the flesh hangs to us like the body of death and we need to be released from its power.

And secondly you will see it has a physical meaning because the body that you have, the body that I'm looking at, your physical body is in a state of death. You see that body that you're living in now you only live in it for approximately five seconds and then you will be out of it. That body is dying whilst you're living there.

You see when we get to the age of 70 that's the duration of man's life. All the other years are only added because of the grace of God. But when we get to 80 or 90 we begin to fold up and then death comes.

And most Christians who are over 90 they want to live to a hundred. They want to go to be with the Lord and that's the right way. Be a wonderful thing to be out of the body and present with the Lord Jesus.

But this is what he's saying. The same Holy Spirit that comes into you is so great and glorious that when he hears the word from the Lord that means when he comes the second time that same Holy Spirit that has been forming Christ in your personality will change your body. Now would that fella there come up and give me a hand.

What's your name? Pardon? Wally. Good. Now this is a great boy.

This is when he fills out he'll be terrific I'll tell you that. Do you want to fill out? Do you? I know. It's lovely.

Well you can be filled with the Spirit you see Wally. Lovely. Where do you come from? Just up the road.

Lovely. Good. How old are you? 15.

What do you want to be when you grow up? Are you really good? Yeah. Not like a little boy. I said what do you want to be when you grow up? Guess what he said.

I could have strangled him. A belly button pricker in a jelly baby factory. All right now off we go.

Cockneys you could strangle them sometimes. Now when a person becomes a Christian do watch this. The Holy Spirit comes in and he wants to change that personality or he wants to improve the personality so that the beauty and the loveliness of Jesus is seen in you.

In your body you have two natures one is the flesh and the other is the Spirit and these two are in conflict in that body constantly. Now there comes a moment when God will show you victory over the conflict like this. He will say something like this.

The same Holy Spirit that's changing your inner life is so powerful that when the Lord Jesus comes the second time that same mighty Holy Spirit will immediately change the body. Think of that. So no longer will

it be the body of humiliation the body of death.

It will be the body of glory and then death will be swallowed up in victory. Now let's get that word swallow up. When the Lord Jesus was on the cross he tasted death for everyone.

So as a believer you'll never taste death. You may go through the article of it but you'll never taste it when you cross over your Jordan it will be the presence of the Lord. But we still die physically but in 1 Corinthians 15 it says death is swallowed up in victory.

Now what does that mean? Well it's taken from the idea of a ship going across the Med and it disappears it sinks and when the rescuers come they can't see a speck of the boat that sunk. It's disappeared gone forever. Now when the Lord Jesus comes he will change that body so it's like under his glorious body and death then will be swallowed up in victory so you'll never see a speck of it again.

Now what he's saying is this the same Holy Spirit that will change your body and then eventually if we had time to read Romans 8 change the whole world is the one that's in you. Now watch there's the Spirit there's the flesh. Now the Spirit is a million times greater than the flesh and therefore he says go and sit down lovely.

Therefore brethren we are debtors to the flesh not to the flesh to live after the flesh for if you live after the flesh you shall die. What does that mean? Immediately a person reveals the flesh he doesn't look a Christian. Let me put it to you like this supposing now you saw me lose my temper you say he doesn't look a preacher you shouldn't say that you said he doesn't look like a Christian or supposing you heard me tell a deliberate lie he doesn't look like a Christian.

Now he is a Christian but when you see a manifestation of the flesh he doesn't look like that. So what basically is he saying? If you live after the flesh you will not look like a Christian but if through the Spirit to mortify the flesh. Now what does that word mortify mean? It's an awful word in fact I don't like to tell you what it means but I think I must.

Do you remember when Saul was told to deal with the Amalekites and he defeated them and Samuel came to see him there was some sheep and oxen and Saul said to Samuel I've done what the Lord has commanded meaning I have annihilated the Amalekites and all that belongs to them. So Samuel being a very perceptive man said this what's the bleating of the sheep there? What's the lowing of the oxen? He could have strangled those beasts. Where did they come from? Who put them there? And then Saul said I've used them for the purpose of worship.

You can't use the flesh for worship. So right at that moment Samuel said listen to obey is better than sacrifice to hearken than the fat of ram and who should come in but Agag the king of the Amalekites and he came in very delicately. Surely he said the bitterness of death is past.

Now this is the hard thing Samuel took a sword and cued him to pieces. Terrible you say. Now that's the meaning of the word mortifier.

You hate the flesh. You loathe it and now he says in the power of the spirit mortify it put it to death but someone almost tripped me up the other day. Young man came to me he said how do you mortify and with tears in his eyes he said this if I could take my flesh life out I'd stick a fork through it like I would a sausage.

I hate it but I can't. How do I mortify? Do you know how to do it? Look at the flesh look at its manifestations and say I hate it. I will not listen to it and when it speaks give it an emphatic no.

Look at the spirit say that you love him and when he gives you those loving overtures just say yes and every day before you come out of your room have a little session with the Lord and say this Lord on Thursday morning for the first time in my life I'm going to mortify the flesh. I don't belong to it. It's a foreigner in my body.

Lord Jesus you've judged it. I'm going to say no to it. Lord Jesus speak to me through the spirit and let me obey the spirit and what will happen.

When we mortify the flesh we live. Do you know what that means? The abundance of light will be seen in you. Let's ask God to make that

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